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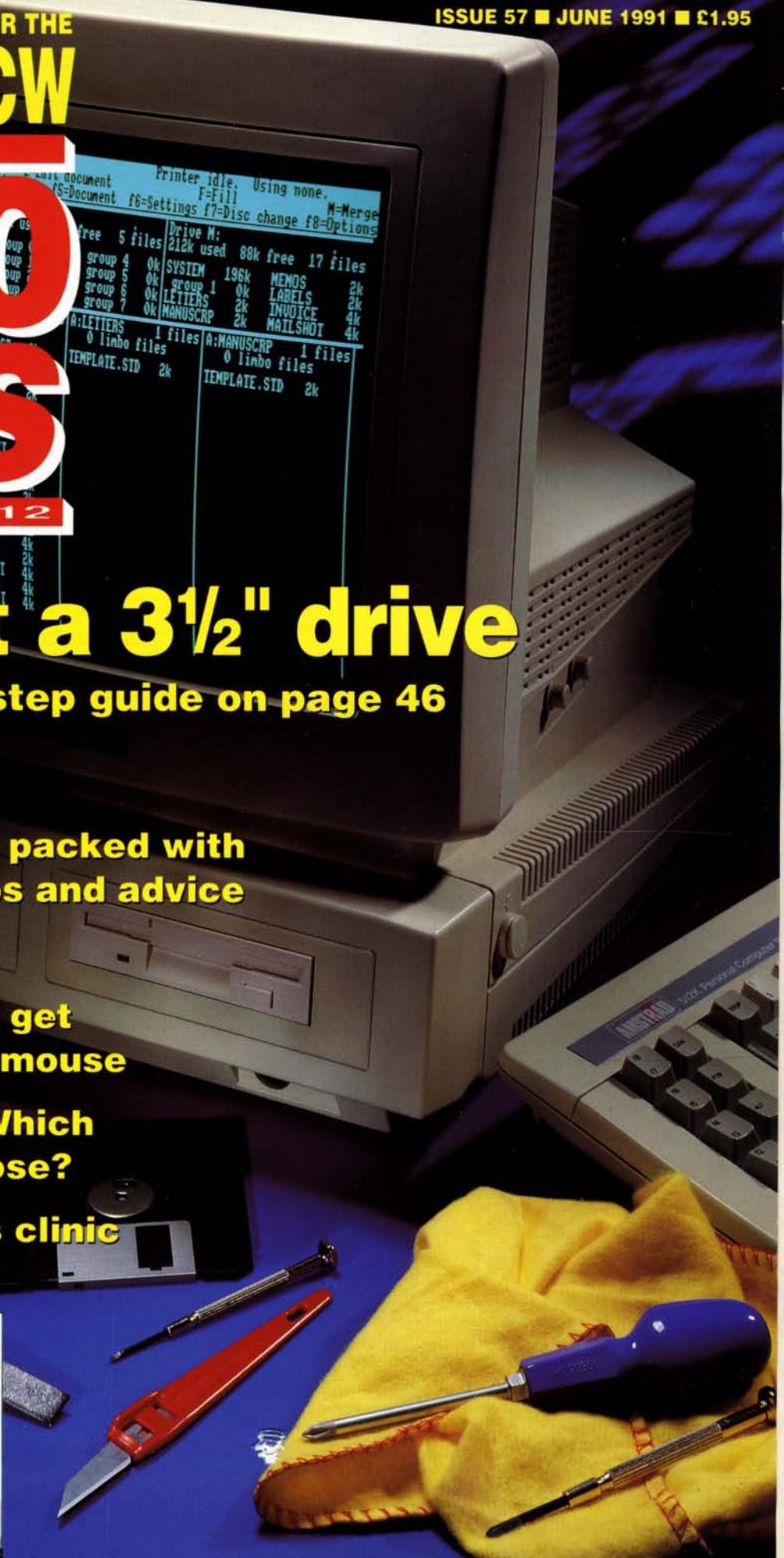
How to fit a 3½" drive

Turn to our step by step guide on page 46

PLUS

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- **LOCOFILE Tutorial**
- **DTP special:** How to get the best out of your mouse
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06



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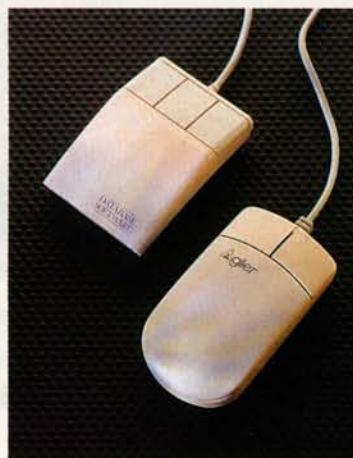
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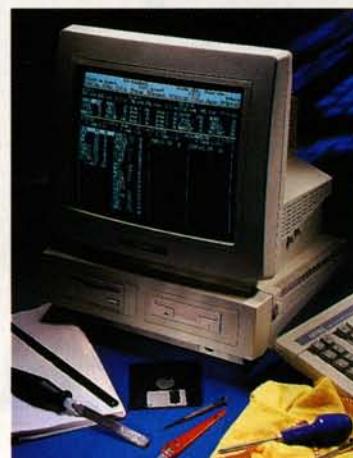
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The pages where you do all the talking!

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Sophie Lankenau - Editor

The idea of fitting an internal 3.5" drive to your PCW probably fills many a proud owner with terror. Your 9512 is working in perfect order; why tempt fate by taking it to bits and attempting what could be a tricky operation? And just how can you cram that extra inch-worth of drive into a space which seems far too small?

We can assure you that no such worries need detain you. Take another look at the cover of this issue. We fitted the drive using the tools that you see laid out around the machine. And only those tools. The operation took less than an hour to complete, and the drive is working perfectly. We're now

using 3.5" discs with the greatest of ease, and as a result, can communicate quite happily with the PCW's elder cousin, the PC. So, don't be put off - give it a try. With the exhaustive step by step guide on page 46, you cannot go wrong.

Still in keeping with the practical things in life, we've taken a look at how best to use a mouse within a DTP program. If you are new to this increasingly popular PCW application, our special feature on page 10 sets out to resolve some of the more common teething troubles involved in mouse usage. The feature is backed up by a fabulous competition, in which

you have the chance to win a complete DTP system. All you have to do is to turn to page 90 and answer four straightforward questions!

Don't miss our round-up of the printwheels available for the 9512. It's all very well to read about courier, script and recta, but what do they actually look like? You can, quite literally, take your pick from our selection on page 34; we're offering three readers the chance to win the printwheel of their choice in an extra competition this month.

There's lots to be won, and even more to enjoy in the pages of this month's 8000 Plus. So, off we go!

STEP FORWARD FOR DTP

Brand new product brings extra dynamism to the Micro Design page

Desk top publishing on the PCW was recently given a new lease of life when Creative Technology unveiled their latest product: the Micro Design Utilities Disc. It makes Micro Design the first ever PCW program to rotate, bend and reflect images on the page.

"This is an entirely new venture," said Nik Holmes from Creative Technology. "The disc contains a number of programs to enhance the performance of Micro Design 2 and ProScan."

Both packages can now mimic the effects seen in magazines and advertising. Pictures can be rotated, bent, twisted or reflected. "It will do wonders for people's layout," said Nik. "Now they can produce interesting, dynamic pages."

The trend away from simple layouts started with Micro Diagonals from Exemplar Design. This allowed you to write diagonally across a Micro Design page. However, the new suite of programs from

Creative Technology take the concept much further. The developments which have been made are a direct response to user requests.

Another popular addition is faster printing. In the past, users of Micro Design and ProScan have complained that printing is too slow. The new product aims to rectify this for external printers. Printing times are slashed in half for owners of 24-pin printers, by a third for 9-pin printers and a hefty two thirds for laser and desktop printers. Sadly, the only printer to miss out is the PCW's own built-in dot matrix printer.

The release of the utilities disc comes at a time when all seemed quiet on the DTP front. It represents the first real sign of progress since ProScan was released by the same company last September. The Utilities Disc costs £19.50 (including VAT) and can be used with ProScan and Micro Design. To find out more, call Creative Technology on (0889) 567160.

BAD ADVICE ANGERS PCW USER

£1000 on a new machine. "I was incensed," said Mr Toulson. "My PCW has given me excellent service."

The advice from the company seems to be prompted by their own bad programming.

Mr Toulson bought the company's Simplex Accounts program in 1987. Since the budget, it cannot run with the new VAT rate and Micro Retailer Systems do not plan to upgrade the program. They say that, "due to the way it was written it cannot be changed".

Instead, they offer the PC version of Simplex Accounts. In order to run the program, they came up with the helpful suggestion of buying one of their PC computers at over £1000.

Mr Toulson was unimpressed. "In truth, it is their own product that hasn't stood up to the test of time," he said. He plans to switch to another program, Money Manager PCW. The move will cost him just £49.95. "It is better than Micro Simplex, and I don't have to change my excellent Amstrad PCW 8512," he said.



'Dump your PCW' was the advice given to this man by a retailer

8000 Plus reader Mr Toulson, pictured above, was shocked recently to hear his PCW called 'old' and 'obscure' by a major computer dealer.

The criticisms came in a letter from Micro Retailer Systems. In it, the company urge users to dump their PCW and spend



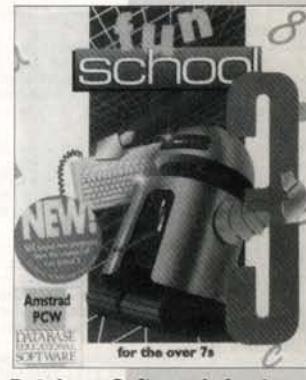
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Few programs receive such an accolade and its creators at Database Software were thrilled. Managing director Chris Payne, said the win was "a welcome addition to the Fun School success story."

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Database Software's best selling educational package wins a European award

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TOP LEVEL STAFF LEAVE AMSTRAD



Alan Sugar is now firmly back in the driving seat following the loss of several top figures at Amstrad

TAKING STOCK

Small businesses want the whole topic of computerised stock control de-mystified say accounts software specialists SD MicroSystems. And they claim that their new program, Small Trader PCW, is just the one for the job.

"Users who purchase a high-brow system often struggle to get to grips with its complexities," they explained. "Small Trader aims to make life easier".

One sales entry to the program will automatically adjust both the stock levels and the sales account of the customer. Invoices or statements can be produced using a built-in price list. Stock levels are checked within the program so the user knows when to re-order.

STAR WARS

The printer war wages on unremittingly. This month sees a cut in prices of the Star range. The 9-pin FR-10 is now £399 and has a free colour kit. The LC-15 can be used for wide printouts and is now reduced by £100 to the new price of £299. All of these prices include VAT.

BACK TO THE BAD OLD DAYS

In the early days of the PCW, Amstrad came up with a great sales line. "Throw away your typewriter" went up the cry. Sure enough, many people headed for the nearest dustbin or Oxfam shop. But was it really a good idea?

"There are many things you can do with a typewriter that you can't do on the PCW," said Dave Vince from Airline. In response to this notion, he has released a program called Type to take us back to the bad old days. It literally transforms the PCW 9512 into a typewriter.

With the program Type you can use the PCW for all of those fiddly jobs, such as filling in forms. The idea behind the program is a simple one. It forces the 9512 printer to type the letter as soon as it entered at the keyboard. The user simply

Amstrad has shed some of its top staff in a recent spate of redundancies. Thirty seven staff were laid off - including the managing director, Barry Young.

The cutbacks came as no surprise to Amstrad insiders. "I wasn't shocked at the news that I had to go," said a former employee, Peter Roebuck. "I knew that business was hard."

There is also talk of Alan Sugar's desire to have more say in the future direction of Amstrad. The loss of a tier of management has given him more control of the company.

Amstrad, however, say that the blame lies with the recession - and not with the company itself. "We have the reputation of being a very successful company and we want to stay that way," said an Amstrad spokesman.

The company describe the program as, "equally suitable both for service or stock-based companies." And that could mean anything from mail order shopping to your local gardening suppliers.

To keep your accounts in order, SD MicroSystems also produce a program called General Ledger. Again it is aimed at the newcomer. "General Ledger offers a fresh, low-cost approach to accounting," they claim.

You can get hold of Small Trader PCW from SD MicroSystems, P.O. Box 24, Hitchin, Herts, (0462) 422897. The price of the program is £36.00 (including VAT). To buy General Ledger and Small Trader as a package costs £51.00 (incl. VAT).

Star describe the printers as "workhorses," and say that the price drops reflect increasing demands for their ever popular printers. Further details of these and other changes to the Star price range can be obtained from the company by telephoning (0494) 471111.

positions the paper and types in the words. There are no editing facilities within Type, so you need to get it right first time.

However, another program on the disc does make allowances for bad typing. It is called Envelopes, and allows you to type in and correct an entire address. You then position the envelope and print out the address with one key press. The most common addresses could be stored in a database for quick access.

Also on the disc is a clever program called Cheque. Give it the name of the payee and the amount in numbers and the program will print out the entire cheque - including the words.

Type, Envelopes and Cheques are available on one disc from Airline Instruments Ltd. The disc costs £10.99.

PICTURE THIS ON YOUR PCW

Two new clip-art discs are now available to Micro Design users. The first is called Bighead from HD Design. The company hope that it will "leap out and catch your attention." It allows you to create super-large, 3D characters on your PCW.

HD design say that the disc is an ideal aid to designing posters and signs. "There is a temptation with desk top publishing to cram too much into a page," they said. "Bighead works on the principle of keeping it simple". The disc contains the letters as picture files to be loaded into a ready-made page.

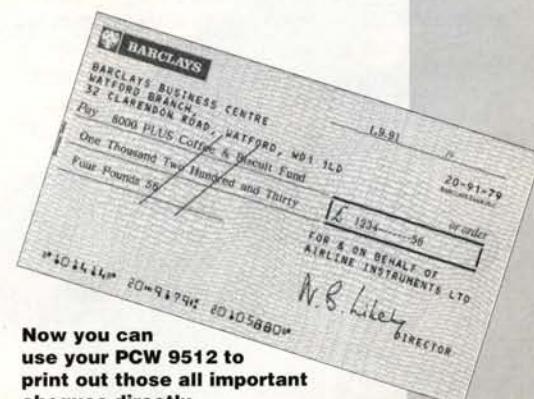
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Publicise the event and write the score: it can all be done using Micro Design, and new programs Bighead and Harmony

The other newcomer to the scene is Harmony. Again the disc contains a selection of picture files, but this time the subject is music. "Harmony provides an easy way of producing musical notation within Micro Design," say the producers.

The Harmony disc is available from Crazy Diamond Design, 23 Dawes Close, Armitage, Rugeley, Staffs, WS15 4BE. It costs £16.99, including VAT. Bighead comes at a price of £19.95 including VAT.

Both programs are available direct from HD Design, 3 Roundthorn Way, Goldsworth Park, Woking, Surrey, GU21 3QN.



Now you can use your PCW 9512 to print out those all important cheques directly

including VAT and postage. Contact Airline at Elstree Aerodrome, Elstree, Hertfordshire WD6 3AW, telephone (081) 9534912 for further details.

Competition winners!

April's Teqnich keyboard competition attracted one of the largest responses ever seen for an 8000 Plus competition.

Thousands of you were keen to get your hands on the brand new PCW keyboard - and we don't blame you! Sadly, only three of you are destined to receive one free of charge, and those lucky winners are the following: Liz Birtwhistle from Ulverston, Cumbria; W Corbett from Weymouth, Dorset and Douglas M Henley from Cardiff. Congratulations!

The answers to the questions were as follows:
1) b 2) b 3) c 4) b 5) b
Well done to all those of you who spotted the deliberate mistake in question 4; the movement of the Quick Brown Fox should have been in the present tense for the rule to be true.

ON THE UP

The PCW utility SuperDOS is now claimed to be better than ever. "It has been extensively re-written, to make it more compact, faster and with more features," say its creators Encyclasoft.

Fans of SuperDOS will already be familiar with the transformation it offers. The list of features make it sound like a CP/M wonder-drug. Rather than the enigmatic A> prompt of CP/M, SuperDOS displays all of the options on-screen with the help of menus, windows and pointers.

With SuperDOS you can still copy files, list files on a disc and do everything else that CP/M can. SuperDOS just tries to make it a little bit easier.

The differences between SuperDOS II and the original SuperDOS are small, but important enough to be significant. The notepad, used to jot down memos, has increased in size. File copying is faster than before. The original SuperDOS allowed you to choose a program from a menu rather than type in its name. In SuperDOS II this principle is extended to include BASIC programs.

Many other small additions to the program all add up to quite a substantial improvement. The new program is slightly more expensive. SuperDOS II will cost £34.95 including VAT (£5 more than its predecessor). The old SuperDOS has been reduced from £29.95 to £12.99. Encyclasoft say this is "a special incentive to the traditionally careful PCW buyer."

Encyclasoft hope that those who choose the original version of the program will be so impressed that they will go on to buy the SuperDOS II upgrade for £22.95.

Further details on SuperDOS can be obtained from Encyclasoft (0270) 811890.

COLOUR KIND

The printer market is nothing if not confusing. There are already hundreds of printers vying for the buyer's attention, but the new printer from Citizen offers something a bit different.

For a start, the Citizen Swift 9x has a colour kit, so the user can produce technicoloured printouts.

It also allows wide printing so that a large spreadsheet, for instance, can fit on to one page. There is already a smaller version of this printer, the Swift 9, which has proved very popular. The new printer also compares well with the successful Citizen Swift 24x (reviewed in issue 54 of 8000 Plus). The difference between the two is apparent in the price. The Citizen Swift 24x is £489 whereas the Citizen 9x is £329 (including VAT). The minus side is that the Citizen Swift 9x produces lower quality printouts than the 24x version. More details can be obtained from Citizen on (0895) 72621.

Priced at £329, the new Citizen Swift 9x printer is wider than the popular Swift 9



Priced at £329, the new Citizen Swift 9x printer is wider than the popular Swift 9

NEWS

DOING THE LAMBETH WALK

Lamstrad is the name given to a new PCW User's Club in the centre of London - in Lambeth, to be precise. The club meets at The Strand Centre, Elm Park, Brixton Hill, SW2, which just happens to be the address of the Lambeth Adult Education Institute.

Besides the premises, they've also managed to secure the services of three of the tutors from the Institute; so not only do they enjoy excellent facilities (with both 8000 and 9000 machines), they are also able to guarantee expert advice!

The group meets during the academic year, and sessions usually take place in the early evening - ideal for office workers on their way home. The next meeting will be on Tuesday June 4, and there is a charge of a mere 60p per session - a real bargain!

Details can be obtained from Derek Moody on (071) 733 6995 - but only in the evenings, please.

COMPUTER LEEDS

Meanwhile, in Leeds Dennis Major and Simon Mitchell read our March edition of Club News, and got together! The result is a brand new club in the Leeds area, called (at this stage) the 'Leeds Amstrad Club'.

Although they are only planning at the moment, they nevertheless have dreams for the future, and are of course looking for more people to recruit into the club. Their first official meeting will be on 3rd June, and subjects under discussion will include... well, just about anything you want to talk about, really!

The man to get in touch with is Simon Mitchell, 35 Nowell Terrace, Harehills, Leeds 9; he can also be contacted on (0532) 493843. Simon is an all round PCW expert - with experience of lots of PCW software and hardware. When you add that to all the other expertise which must be available in the Leeds area, the meetings should be very well worth the effort of attending.

BASILDON BOND

Another club finding its feet is the Basildon Club, which we mentioned last month. Although not yet completely up and running (that's their opinion, not ours) they nevertheless meet - for the present - every Monday. Each meeting greets about ten members, although that population is rather a 'floating' one. The best response, they reckon, has come from mentions in 8000 Plus, and they are

now in the throes of creating a questionnaire designed to seek out members' computing strengths. It certainly looks like Basildon is a club to keep a close eye on.

So too the Gloucestershire Club. They now have a flourishing membership roll, and have recently had their first 'lecture' meeting - with a talk on Micro Design 2, ProScan and the Canon BJ-10e printer.

FOLLOW THE MAP

At the other end of the scale come the more established clubs. The M25 Amstrad User Group will be having a presentation on MJ Frampton's "Routeplanner" program at their meeting on June 17th. An appropriate subject for a club named after a road!

Their recent meetings have included a lecture on Signwriter, Protext and SuperCalc 2. If a particular software manufacturer cannot make a meeting, they are often quite happy to send a presentation.

This wide range of subject material is clearly what makes the 25 or so members of the club so staunch in their support. They come from as far apart as Reading and Ilford, and represent a whole range of computing experience. From the beginners to office workers who use a computer all day, people attend the meetings not only to learn, but also to pass on ideas, and live up to the club's motto: 'We help each other'.

But they do not only help each other. Their January meeting, which was mentioned a couple of times in 8000 Plus, eventually made over £415 pounds for the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. Many thanks again go to Cornix for the kind gesture which led to that donation being made.

Other big clubs meeting up in June include the Teesside User's Group, who will be looking at Protext and Mailmerge and the Hereford group, who will hear about (hopefully) LocoLink. Details of contacts for these and all PCW clubs are to be found on page 84 of this issue.

SUMMER NEWS

The summer is a great time for club activities - your club may well be planning trips, barbecues, extra meetings and all sorts of other things.

No piece of information is too small for this column. Do let us know your plans for the future, as well as news of how things are going, at Club News, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW; items to reach us by the first week of the month preceding cover date.

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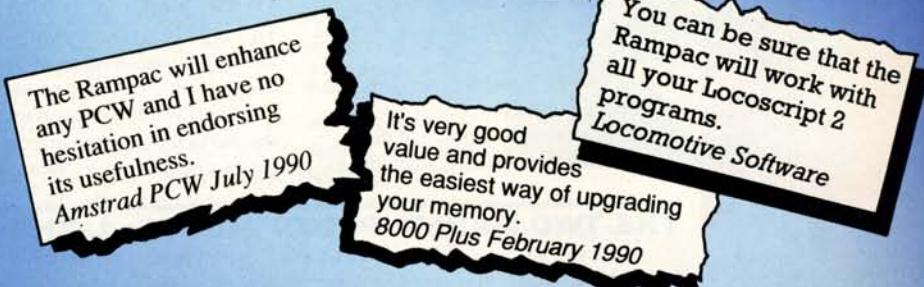
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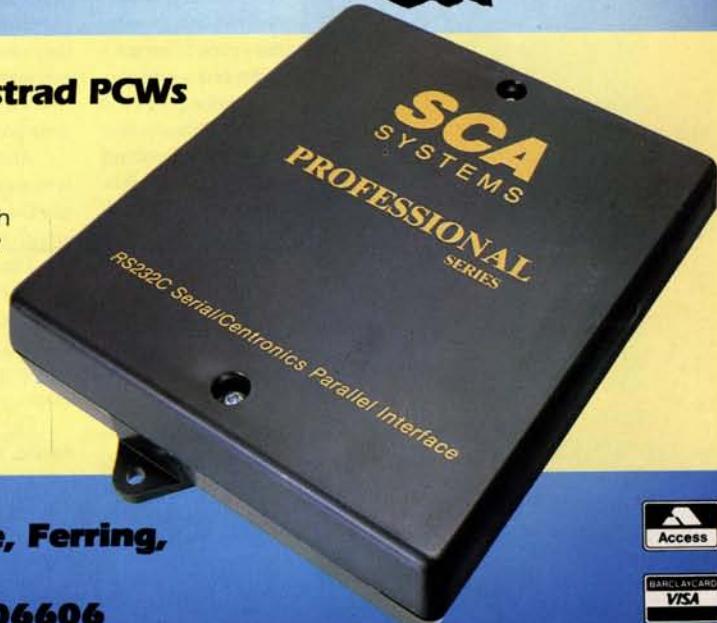
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Mice Work

Using a mouse within a desk top publishing program can increase flexibility. But how? Alec Rae investigates

For many computers they are standard. For some computers, such as Apple Macintoshes, Ataris and Amigas you could hardly think of doing anything without one. But to many PCW users they are still a bit of a mystery. We speak, of course, of mice - those strange, little plastic creatures with long cable tails that stick out of the back of computers. So why is it that the mouse has not taken off among PCW users the way it has on other computers? And should more users be considering buying them? This must depend on how you use your PCW. For instance, mice are particularly useful when used with many graphics or

desk top publishing program. They make moving and positioning of text and graphics far easier - and freehand drawing is virtually impossible with just the cursor keys.

And for any program working with a WIMP environment a mouse is vital. Now first you must understand that a WIMP environment has got nothing to



The Kempston mouse, attached to the diminutive interface that connects it to your PCW

Kempston mouse. The first versions now look at least 30 years old compared to the sleek, smooth lines of the latest version. Why this looks better is difficult to say - but it certainly does.

It is a two button version, which is actually more than enough for virtually any application. Just as software

do with the dressing room of the Welsh international rugby team.

WIMP is an acronym for Windows, Icons, Mice and Pointers. They were going to call it PWIM but that never seemed to catch on.

It's rude to point

So in a WIMP environment you don't type in commands or use keystrokes. Instead you use your mouse to point to icons (little symbols that represent the command or option you are wanting) and click on the mouse buttons to carry out the actions you want.

Now, admittedly, there are very few WIMP environment programs available for the PCW. Jeeves, the memory-resident desk-top program bundled with the Kempston mouse and one or two similar organisers over the years have made a brave attempt at WIMP status.

But apart from desk top publishing programs like Stop Press MicroDesign 2 and The Desk Top Publisher, where the mouse is useful for other purposes, there have been few attempts to use the WIMP system in general CP/M programs.

Of chickens, eggs and mice

This is probably because of a 'chicken and egg' situation where software designers don't want to go overboard with their WIMP set ups because this will make the program inaccessible to the vast majority of PCW owners.

All programs have to be geared for both mouse owning and non-mouse owning PCW users. And it's probably not such a good idea trying to do this by using the cursor keys to control the 'mouse' cursor as this can be a painfully slow and quite imprecise way of doing things.

So until the mouse population grows to a significant level it is unlikely that we are going to see the full benefits of this quick and effective add-on.

At present it is also possible to use a mouse with some PCW word processors and spreadsheets, allowing you to move around the screen and 'click' on any word or cell you want.

This is certainly a more sensible way to go about things - although with the relatively slow screen update on the PCW any real advantages from this set up are limited. And until you have the chance to click on commands as well it probably won't catch on too much.

This relative lack of interest in mice is admittedly against the trend in other types of computer. In the IBM-compatible PC market, more and more programs are becoming 'mouse driven' - and that now includes word processors and databases.

And many computers are now so based round a WIMP set up that you never see a stark, lonely A> prompt; instead, you just click on the program icon you want in order to run your chosen program.

THE TWO MAIN TYPES OF MOUSE: 1. THE KEMPSTON

It is amazing how designs change over the years. It seems just a few years ago people thought a Morris Minor was a sleek, smart looking car. Nowadays all cars seem to have the same sort of curved lines and yet the poor old Morris somehow seems to appear a trifle dated. The same thing has happened to the

designers have to take into account that there might be non-mouse owning users they also have to consider that a good percentage of mouse owners have only two buttons on their mouse and adjust their program to suit.

And frankly there are not many operations where three buttons are really needed. It is often simpler and more intuitive to use a two-button system.

The performance is also improved with the mouse running smoothly round the desk. This is helped by the fact that the programs have also improved with the cursors running round the screen more smoothly too.

The only let-down for the Kempston mouse, therefore, has to be the mouse interface box (computerese for the box that fits into the back of the computer) which has no through-connector and therefore doesn't allow 'piggy-backing'.

The Kempston mouse comes with what, at least the more disorganised

PCW users may find two invaluable programs. They are Jeeves, a memory resident desk top program and Daatafax, the program which has the dubious task of organising your personal organiser.

These programs are perhaps too closely related to be entirely sensible to be bundled together. Both have address books, calenders diaries and calculators and you can't help feeling that together they would make one good package and consequently save you a lot of duplicated data inputting.

The difference is that with Daatafax you print everything out on to pages that fit into your personal organiser, while Jeeves should be able to pop up at any time that you are using your PCW to allow you to find a telephone number or take a note.

This is where the memory resident program comes into its own. It is loaded into memory and at the correct call (in this case pressing both buttons on the

mouse) it should, in theory, pop up on your screen no matter what program you are using at the time.

However, in practice, it is not quite as easy as this. The information in the manual quite rightly points out that it runs alongside most CP/M programs like WordStar, Cracker and Supercalc.

However, Jeeves doesn't run alongside a program like LocoScript, which isn't a CP/M program, or Protext, which quite firmly takes control of the situation and won't let anything else in.

In addition, it will not work with programs like Stop Press and MicroDesign 2, which take up all of the m:drive (unless, perhaps, you invest in some extra RAM). The most depressing feature is that with it loaded into the m:drive there isn't space in the standard 8512 m:drive to run Daatafax.

So, if you are keen to use Jeeves, you should check in advance whether the program will run successfully with your favourite programs.

If you can use it with your software, one major plus is an easily accessible file handling system. What goes on in a PCW three inch disc is often a mystery

to even quite experienced users. When you run Jeeves you are given a graphic representation of all the files on the discs in any drive (including the m:drive). You can tell at a glance whether they are program files or documents or even assembler source programs (should you ever be looking for one of those) by the difference in the icon on display.

Pick-up trick

Using the mouse, you can simply pick up files and erase them (putting them in the little bin icon) or copy them to another drive (drag them over to a little disc icon). There is no doubt this is much easier to remember and use than PIP.COM and to some PCW owners might be the break-through needed to tackle file handling properly.

The phonebook, calendar and diary are definitely handy although the notebook might be thought on the small side for practical use.

However the final feature that Jeeves provides might well be the greatest blessing of all. Running as a separate program you can install a clock that

appears constantly in the bottom left hand corner of the screen to tell you that it is three o'clock in the morning and you better give up playing Tetris.

Daatafax

Daatafax is one of those programs that seems like a good idea. If you are neat, tidy and organised enough to carry a personal organiser, why not go the whole hog and have everything in your personal organiser printed?

There are sections in Daatafax for addresses and telephone numbers. It will generate a diary or a calendar for any period you want, and there is a section for notes. Once these are safely stored on disc you can print them out on special paper designed to fit in your personal organiser. It will accept ASCII files from other word processors (like LocoScript to name but one) and you can import graphics files and print them out on to pages. Daatafax will also allow for two-sided printing.

It has bright, interesting graphics and the program is made even more simple to use with the aid of your Kempston mouse - and a real WIMP environment.

2: THE AMX MOUSE

The AMX mouse definitely comes with everything you need. It has three buttons, allowing you to tackle any application and it has a through connector on its interface box.

This allows piggy-backing, the process of fitting one interface box into another, allowing you to use a number of different attachments at the same time.

With only one expansion port on a PCW there is often a fair amount of competition for space. With desk top publishing applications, especially, you may want to fit a RAM pack, a hard disc connector, a scanner and an RS232 attached to a 24-pin or laser printer as well as a mouse interface.

Now it might not be physically possible to piggy-back all those attachments but at least with the AMX having a through connector you don't have the problem of having to make sure that all the others have through connectors so you can put the mouse on last. Without it, you could find yourself in the irritating situation of constantly having to close down your program and switch off to fit a new interface. In our tests, we ran a RAM pack, and RS232

and the AMX mouse all fitted to the one expansion port without problems.

It runs smoothly and easily, although the rectangular design might be marginally less comfortable on the hand than the Kempston.

The Desk Top Publisher

You can buy the AMX mouse on its own or, for a mere £20 more with Desk Top Publisher, which as the name implies is a desk top publishing program. In fact, it was one of the first DTP packages available for the PCW.

Certainly, if you are intending to use the mouse for something other than desk top publishing this could be a reasonable investment. The Desk Top Publisher is fine for limited DTP although it is probably too limited for serious use.

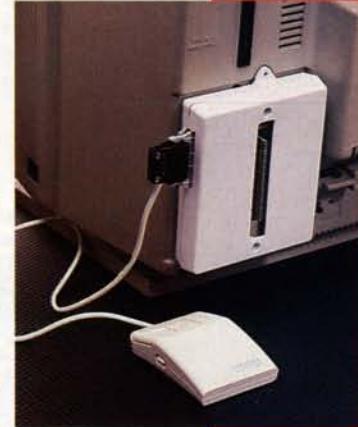
Unlike all the other DTP packages it breaks the task of page make-up into distinct sections. In one section you prepare your graphics, and in another you prepare your text (the system has a very reasonable text editor). In another section you bring these elements together to make up a page.

The Desk Top Publisher has a choice

of 15 fonts, a reasonable graphics facility and quite a wide choice of clip art. What it doesn't have is the spontaneity of making a page up as you go along. It might be possible for a trained page designer to visualise what a page will look like without seeing it but it could perhaps be difficult for the amateur.

There is a page preview facility, and you can create headlines by blowing up a small font to any size. You have to experiment with this, though, and try to achieve results which are not distorted. This will come with a bit of practice.

This package is ideal for those just branching out into DTP. And as it comes with the support of the superior AMX mouse, you will probably become addicted to experimenting with The Desk Top Publisher in no time.



The AMX mouse in position, attached to the interface

THE MOUSE AT WORK

The idea of the mouse is simple and yet ingenious. You have a plastic box that fits neatly into the palm of your hand with either two or three buttons on the top. It is attached to your PCW by a cable about five feet long, fitted by a special attachment to the expansion port - that slot on the back of the machine.

Once you've got your mouse set up, with the appropriate software, it scurries about your desk on a heavy ball bearing fitted into the base. This turns three

rollers inside the mouse. The computer reads the rotation of these rollers and interprets from that, the distance and the direction the mouse is being moved.

This information is used to control the movement of a cursor on the computer screen. As you manipulate the mouse, so the cursor moves about the screen, mirroring the every movement of your hand on the desk top.

Then, when you get to the part of the screen you want, you can carry out

various functions using the mouse. For instance you may want to carry out a certain command by clicking on an icon with the mouse.

Programs vary as to how they achieve this but generally you will move the cursor (usually a little arrow shape) until it is pointing at the icon you want.

By clicking the left hand button you can choose that icon. Sometimes this will even start the command but if not, you'll need to do a double click (two

Free for all!

If you turn to page 90 of this month's issue, you'll be in for a pleasant surprise. In this month's competition, we're giving away three super DTP prizes! The winner will receive a complete DTP system, consisting of a mouse, an interface and The Desk Top Publisher software, and the two runners up win a mouse and interface! Don't miss it!

clicks in rapid succession) to start the machine working. The more you use the mouse, the easier this movement becomes. The initial temptation is to be heavy handed with the buttons; you will soon learn, however, that they respond to a very light touch.

Looking for a paint pot

With the technique mastered, you can go on to implement mouse driven commands. For example, say you are in a graphics program and you want to change to painting mode. You look for the most likely icon. In the more imaginative programs it might be a little picture of a paint pot or in the more practical it might be the word PAINT.

You move the cursor until it is touching the paint pot, click on the mouse button and the program responds. But once you get into a WIMP system you will find that virtually all commands will be carried out this way, from saving a file to closing the program down.

Options can also be set quickly and efficiently using a mouse. This is particularly useful because you can constantly have option icons displayed on the screen, keeping you up-to-date with the current position.

So, to go back to the painting example, all the time you are painting you can have little symbols for black ink, white ink and even patterned ink in a corner of the screen or readily accessible in some pop up menu. Whether they are chosen or not will be signified by the icon being reversed or having a box round it. Everything is very clearly shown on the screen.

It's a drag, adjusting boxes

But perhaps one of the most effective uses for the mouse is in controlling the adjustable box. This is a common feature in graphics program where you want to choose an area of the screen to move, erase or copy. Click on the suitable icon and a box will appear. But adjusting it to

cover the area required is done most effectively by 'dragging' the corners of the box with the mouse.

This involves placing the arrow-shaped cursor at one corner or side of the box, clicking on a button and holding it down while you move the mouse. As the cursor moves the box expands or contracts accordingly.

The other area where the mouse really scores is in freehand drawing. By holding down a button you can leave a trail of ink (black pixels) wherever the cursor moves. It takes a bit of practice but it is surprising how quickly you can get used to this method of drawing and produce quite effective results.

One advantage is that you can usually tidy up your drawings in a graphics package using Zoom, the ability to blow up a piece of the screen and switch individual pixels on or off. Here again the mouse speeds up the operation drastically, and you gain a sense of extra control from the flexibility of movement.

HOW TO USE YOUR MOUSE - BASIC HINTS AND TIPS

- Be sure to switch your PCW off before fitting the interface box.
- Fit the cable connector to the box before you fit it to the machine. The expansion port is quite delicate and shaking it about too much, especially if the PCW is switched on, is one of the easier ways of damaging your PCW.
- Make sure the interface box is the right way up. Fitting it upside down will probably lock up your PCW so that it won't even start up.
- Press the box on firmly making sure that it is making a good connection all

the way along the surface of the expansion card.

- Some software will automatically sense that a mouse is fitted although with most programs you will have to choose it as an option in the program.
- Sometimes you will be given the choice of speed - how quickly the cursor will move compared with the movement of the mouse. This is purely a matter of taste but start with a low speed and gradually build it up.
- When holding the mouse, rest your hand gently on the top with your fingers

lying gently on the buttons. The forefinger is the most comfortable one to use for button pressing.

- Don't work on a shiny surface or one that is too sticky; the mouse needs some traction, but will be held up by too much.
- If you have problems with the work surface you would be best to invest in a mouse mat, specifically designed to give the right grip to the surface.
- Always remember you can lift the mouse off the work surface and reposition it without any adverse effect on the work you are doing.

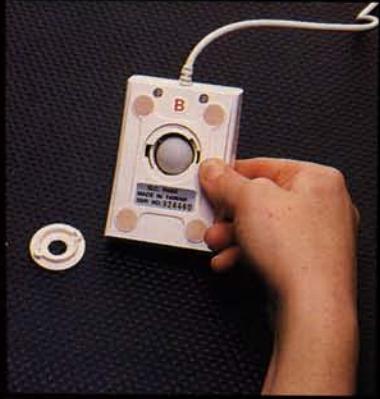
HOW TO CLEAN YOUR MOUSE



Step 1 If your mouse does not appear to be working to full potential the most likely problem is that dust and debris have got into the workings. This can be remedied in minutes. Switch off the PCW and disconnect the mouse from the interface. Turn the mouse upside down and find the ring that holds the ball in place and rotate it in the direction shown in the instructions. For the Kempston it is anti-clockwise, for the AMX it is clockwise.



Step 2 Remove the ring, and put it to one side. You can now see the ball sitting in its chamber. Some debris may be evident even at this stage, so wipe away any excess before removing the ball. Next, take the mouse itself between the palms of both hands and turn it over. The ball will drop into the bottom hand. It is heavier than you might expect, so make sure that you catch it.



Step 3 With the mouse ball freed, take a cloth doused in some surgical spirit and give it a thorough clean. You can use a water dampened cloth to the same effect. You may be surprised at the amount of debris which it has picked up from the work surface. If it is not removed then it will gradually work its way into the roller mechanism. When it appears to be clean, set it aside to dry.



Step 4 With the ball chamber exposed, take a look at the three rollers which sense and interpret the movement of the mouse ball. They can easily become clogged up with dust. Give the rollers a wipe over with a cotton wool bud dipped in surgical spirit. When everything is dry, pop the ball back into the chamber and replace the plastic ring.

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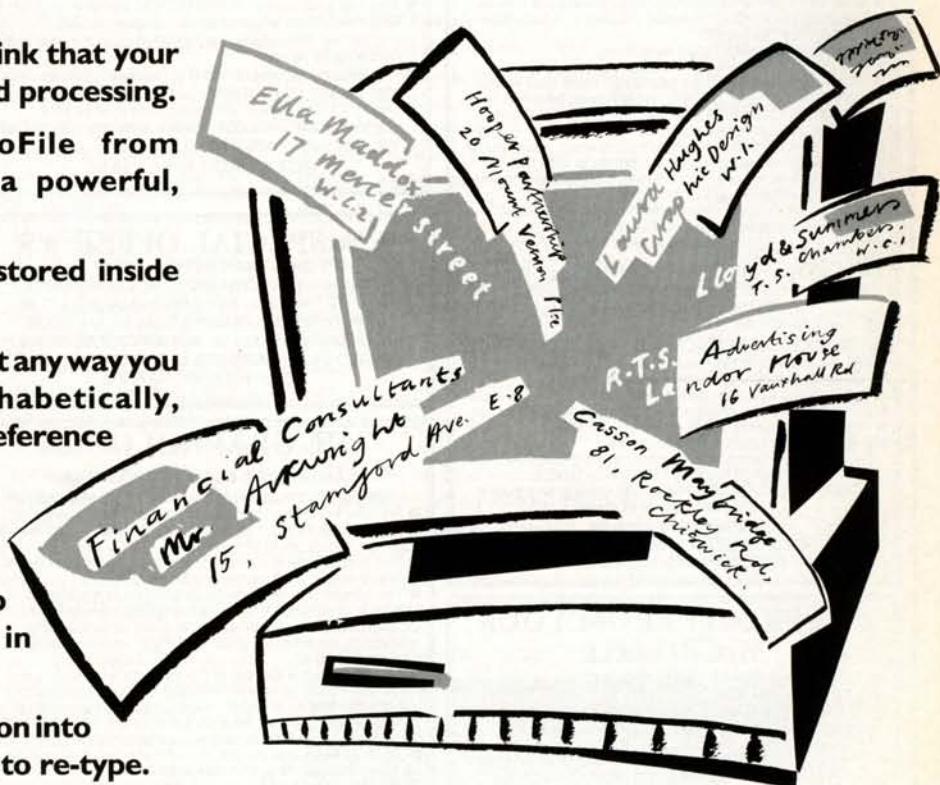
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Finders Keepers

Protext's Find and Replace facility is the ideal tool for the indecisive writer. Martin Le Poidevin uncovers some of its key features

Word processors exist to save you time and effort in constructing your documents. One of the ways in which they can do this is through their Find and Replace functions. Such a function can be vital during both the preparation – and finishing of text.

We have already discovered in this tutorial series how Protext differs from LocoScript in being a command- rather than a menu-driven processor, and how this can add to its speed. This is again the case in the Find and Replace department. Invoking these facilities could not be easier – just use the Find and Exchange keys on your PCW keyboard (Exchange is accessed by pressing [SHIFT][FIND]). It makes no difference whether you were already in command mode or not when you press these keys, as this will automatically be selected for you.

Search and you will find

Suppose that we wish to search for a particular word. For the moment, make sure that your cursor is in the middle of the text. Now press FIND.

A prompt will appear asking what your FIND 'string' is to be. This is the text which you are asking the computer to look for, and it does not necessarily need to be a whole word. It could be a part of a word, or a series of words. It need not even be a character – if you wished to find a tab, or a carriage return, or even a blank space, the computer could do it for you.

Once you have typed your 'string' of text, press [RETURN], and [RETURN] once more, by-passing the 'Options' list which will have appeared. The computer will look for your string in the text. When it finds it, the editing screen will reappear with the cursor positioned over the first instance of the text in question. If the text is not there, you will get a 'Not found' message.

But even if the text is found the chances are that this is not the appearance that you were looking for. You will have to start flicking through the document, using the [+] key, which will make the cursor jump to the next instance of your text. If that is still not the correct one, press [+] again.

Eventually you may reach the end of the document without finding the correct text. If this happens, you will hear a beep, and the message "Not found. Press STOP key" will appear right at the top of the screen. You now have two options. Either (having pressed [STOP]) move to the top of the document (using

[ALT][DOC]) and begin searching again using the [+] key, or stay at the bottom, and (having pressed [STOP]) use the [-] key to move up the document.

Once you are in the middle of the document again you can use either the [+] or [-] keys to move around from occurrence to occurrence. In fact, the computer will remember your string until such time as a new one is defined, so pressing [+] or [-] will reactivate the search at any point.

That is the Find command at its most basic. It is already impressively fast and powerful, but it has still got a few tricks up its sleeve. Those Options which we ignored when we first defined our string provide the key to an even greater flexibility within the feature.

Each option represents a modification of the original command. For instance, our original search began with the cursor in the middle of the document, and searched down the document from that point. But it would normally be easier to begin the search at the top of the document and work through it. The easiest way to do this is the 'Global' option – shortened to 'G' or 'g' on the options menu.

This time define your search string and press [RETURN] as before, but instead of pressing [RETURN] again immediately, type g[RETURN]. Now, no matter where you left the cursor when you entered command mode, the search will start from the top of the document. You are still in control of the search though, and will have to use the [+] and [-] keys as before.

Bottoms up

On the other hand, if you should ever want to do your searching up from the cursor there is an option for this – the 'Backwards' ('B' or 'b' option). This works exactly as the unmodified (ie, non-global) search, except that the [+] and [-] keys work 'the wrong way round' – logical, but prone to being confusing!

For one common use of the Find command, though, the manual search mode (using the [+] key) is less than satisfactory. If you want to know the number of times a particular piece of text occurs, you do not want to have to do all the counting yourself. You have a computer in front of you that could do that much better!

The option you want here is 'Automatic' – shortened to 'A' or 'a' in the menu. And since two (or more) options can be combined, you can arrange for the whole of the document to be analysed. Again you will need to

define your string, but this time make your Options ag [RETURN]. You will never actually enter edit mode with this option; instead after a very short wait the number of times that the string appears in the document will be displayed. And it is very quick – the number of occurrences of the letter 'e' in a 1000 word document will be calculated in less than 5 seconds.

And there's more...

But still the list of options is not exhausted. It could well be that you are writing an article on Roger Mills, the well known 19th century flour magnate. You need to know the number of times that Mr. Mills' name is mentioned, but don't want to know about his mills. The difference, of course, is in the capital letter – so you want to make the search case-dependent. This means that the computer will now begin to take the case of individual letters into account – it will match Mills with Mills, but not with mills or mIlls or MILLS.

To search the whole document you will now need the options agc [RETURN], and the search string Mills.

But that search provided far more occurrences than you expected, apparently because the computer was also counting the 'Mills' in 'LocoMills', the well known manufacturer of

Important!

One situation in which the Replace option could prove useful is in text imported from another word processor. Often the majority of the text will come as intended, but one or two characters – often exotic ones – will have 'got lost' and been replaced by something else. Since this will be a problem throughout the whole document, Find and Replace is clearly the answer you want.

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Page 1 Line 1 Col 1 No markers set
The Government was reeling today after the shock resignation of the Prime Minister, Brenda Forthright. The news broke at 9 o'clock this morning when the Forthright's pet dog appeared on the steps of Number 10 with a piece of paper in its mouth. The note said quite simply: "Gone fishing. Won't be back." The dog trotted along the Mall to Buckingham Palace, where it is understood he passed Mrs Forthright's message on to the Queen. The new Prime Minister will be Mr. X, who was appointed at a special cabinet meeting this afternoon, will take over the reigns of state until a suitable replacement can be found through the usual party electoral process. An opposition spokesman said "Nobody will envy X's appointment. Inheriting all the problems Mrs Forthright left behind, such as over-employment, a healthy economy and a sparklingly efficient civil service will only be seen as the direst bad luck." "We sincerely hope that Mr. X will do everything possible to return the economy to the sad state it was in before Mrs Forthright came into power. We badly need something to complain about!" Before this new appointment, Mr. X had been at 1%.

The sub-editor's nightmare. A news story comes in with details missing, names in different formats, and the wrong layout

PROTEXT Document protext.eg 2K Justify Off Word-Wrap
Page 1 Line 13 Col 33 No markers set
The Government was reeling today after the shock resignation of the Prime Minister, Brenda Forthright. The news broke at 9 o'clock this morning when the Forthright's pet dog appeared on the steps of Number 10 with a piece of paper in its mouth. The note said quite simply: "Gone fishing. Won't be back." The dog trotted along the Mall to Buckingham Palace, where it is understood he passed Mrs Forthright's message on to the Queen. The new Prime Minister will be Mr. X, who was appointed at a special cabinet meeting this afternoon, will take over the reigns of state until a suitable replacement can be found through the usual party electoral process. An opposition spokesman said "Nobody will envy X's appointment. Inheriting all the problems Mrs Forthright left behind, such as over-employment, a healthy economy and a sparklingly efficient civil service will only be seen as the direst bad luck." PROTEXT v2.23 (c) Arnon 1986 Type HELP for Command info
a)FIND FIND string: F Options: (A,B,C,G,W,n)? cg

First we need to decide exactly how to spell the ex-P.M.'s name. There are currently 5 different spellings. A simple Find 'F' (shown here by g for global and c for case-dependent) will suffice.

wheat grinders, with whom Mills had a running dispute. So to make the count absolutely accurate, we now need to tell the computer not only to look for the string 'Mills', but also to check that it appears as a word on its own. The option we need to select for this is the Whole Word option, or 'W'.

Now the list of options that we need to count the word Mills reads: aew. Meaningless to us, but the computer will understand.

The nth degree

One last option remains on the Find menu – the 'nth occurrence' option. Using this option you 'skip' to every nth occurrence of a word.

For instance, on reading through your document, you discover that you have used the word 'grain' far too often. You want to prune every other appearance of the word, but with different substitutions each time.

So you use the Find command, with the search string grain, and the options gw2, where the '2' (which replaces the

'n' on the list) tells the computer to notice only every second occurrence. Likewise, '3' would specify every third occurrence, and 157 every 157th occurrence. You can go all the way up to 255 with this option – any higher than that and the number will be ignored. This is unlikely to be a drawback!

When you press [RETURN] after ag2, the computer will flick through the document, and pick up the second, fourth, sixth... time that the word appears. Using the global (without Automatic) option you can move through the document using the [+] and [-] keys, editing text as necessary. Again, the computer will remember your orders, so that when you have finished with one occurrence, you can hit [+] and the computer will move on to the next 'nth' occurrence below the position in which your cursor finished.

One very useful way in which this 'skip' option could be employed is to check embedded codes. If you have used a large number of [ALT][X] codes – such as bold and italics – you will want

to check that every time you have ordered bold printing to start, there is a corresponding code to stop it. In this case the options to use are 'g2'. Hopefully, only the closing codes will be identified. If you find your cursor over an opening code, you can be sure that you have missed something out.

The Find command, however, does not recognise [ALT][X] as text in its own right – you will have to use ! instead. So to look for a bold code, the search string will be !b, and for an italic li. In addition, a question mark can be found using !?, an exclamation mark using !! and a return with !.. A space counts as a normal character, and so does not need to be given a code.

Equal partners

But the Find command is only half of a double act which share the same options and to a large extent the same function. The difference is that with 'Replace' you will be asked for two sets of text – the 'search' string, and the 'replace' string which will be substituted for it.

For instance, our book 'The Pavement – A Social History' is being published in America. We need to change every mention of pavement to 'Sidewalk'. Easy – press the [EXCH] key, give pavement as the search string, sidewalk as the replace string, and choose the option g. We do not want the search to be automatic because this option will not replace a capital with a capital – for instance, if the word comes at the start of a sentence.

When you press [RETURN] the computer will start searching. When it comes across the word it is looking for, it will stop and ask you (at the very top of the screen) whether you wish that word to be replaced. Pressing Y will effect the exchange; N or [+] will move onto the next item for replacement.

Hand-made

A manual search is the best way of dealing with word exchange; however, other replacements are often better left to the computer to do automatically. Perhaps, as you were writing your document, you only left one space after each full stop. On reflection, though, you have decided that leaving two spaces would be much better. All you have to do is search for ' .' ([FULL STOP][SPACE]) and replace it with ([FULLSTOP][SPACE][SPACE]). Use the options ag.

Alternatively, you may decide that you do not want to highlight your important text with italics, but embolden them instead. Searching for li and replacing with !b will do the trick, and if you use the automatic option, you will also be told the number of replacements made. If this number turns out to be odd, you will know that somewhere in the document there is a spare printer code!

Protext's Find and Replace options are powerful additions to your document-making power. Some of these options you may never use – but then, a good word processor always keeps a few tricks up its sleeve!

The wild side

There is one other nicety available for these commands – the 'wildcard'. Using a question mark instead of any letter will tell the computer that that letter could be anything – from A to Z. It will then act on all the possible combinations. Thus c??t??d could produce 'castled', 'contend', 'chatted' and 'custard'.

Table motion

One handy use for the Find and Replace function could be within tables of information. You could set up the table in the usual way, and insert an asterisk (any character will do) at every point where some information is due to be entered. Then you can go back afterwards with all the information at the ready, ask Protext to Find the asterisk, and you can Replace it for the relevant detail.

PROTEXT Document protext.eg 2K Justify Off Word-Wrap
Page 1 Line 13 Col 33 No markers set
The Government was reeling today after the shock resignation of the Prime Minister, Brenda Forthwright. The news broke at 9 o'clock this morning when the Forthwright's pet dog appeared on the steps of Number 10 with a piece of paper in its mouth. The note said quite simply: "Gone fishing. Won't be back."
The dog trotted along the Mall to Buckingham Palace, where it is understood he passed Mrs Forthwright's message on to the Queen.
The new Prime Minister will be *.* who was appointed at a special cabinet meeting this afternoon, will take over the reigns of state until a suitable replacement can be found through the usual party electoral process.
An opposition spokesman said "Nobody will envy *'s appointment. Inheriting all the problems Mrs Forthwright left behind, such as over-employment, a healthy economy and a sparklingly efficient civil service will only be seen as the direst bad luck."
"We sincerely hope that * will do everything possible to return the economy to the sad state it was in before Mrs Fifthleft came into power. We badly need something to complain about!"
Before this new appointment, * had been at %.

The Find 'F' moves us from instance to instance of the name, and the spelling can be corrected. The FIND might have picked up other 'F's, but it is better to be safe than sorry!

PROTEXT Document protext.eg 2K Justify Off Word-Wrap ALT-H for Help Insert
Page 1 Line 13 Col 46 No markers set
The Government was reeling today after the shock resignation of the Prime Minister, Brenda Forthwright. The news broke at 9 o'clock this morning when the Forthwright's pet dog appeared on the steps of Number 10 with a piece of paper in its mouth. The note said quite simply: "Gone fishing. Won't be back."
The dog trotted along the Mall to Buckingham Palace, where it is understood he passed Mrs Forthwright's message on to the Queen.
The new Prime Minister will be *.* who was appointed at a special cabinet meeting this afternoon, will take over the reigns of state until a suitable replacement can be found through the usual party electoral process.
An opposition spokesman said "Nobody will envy *'s appointment. Inheriting all the problems Mrs Forthwright left behind, such as over-employment, a healthy economy and a sparklingly efficient civil service will only be seen as the direst bad luck."
"We sincerely hope that * will do everything possible to return the economy to the sad state it was in before Mrs Fifthleft came into power. We badly need something to complain about!"
Before this new appointment, * had been at %.

First change the layout – we need a line between each paragraph, and an indent for each. Although the cabinet meeting had not taken place when the report was written, the reporter had the wits to leave each place the name needed to be mentioned...

PROTEXT Document protext.eg 2K Justify Off Word-Wrap ALT-H for Help Insert
Page 1 Line 1 Col 1 No markers set
The Government was reeling today after the shock resignation of the Prime Minister, Brenda Forthwright. The news broke at 9 o'clock this morning when the Forthwright's pet dog appeared on the steps of Number 10 with a piece of paper in its mouth. The note said quite simply: "Gone fishing. Won't be back."
The dog trotted along the Mall to Buckingham Palace, where it is understood he passed Mrs Forthwright's message on to the Queen.
The new Prime Minister will be Cedric Hamfist. Cedric Hamfist, who was appointed at a special cabinet meeting this afternoon, will take over the reigns of state until a suitable replacement can be found through the usual party electoral process.
An opposition spokesman said "Nobody will envy Cedric Hamfist's appointment. Inheriting all the problems Mrs Forthwright left behind, such as over-employment, a healthy economy and a sparklingly efficient civil service will only be seen as the direst bad luck."
"We sincerely hope that Cedric Hamfist will do everything possible to return the economy to the sad state it was in before Mrs Forthwright came into power. We badly need something to complain about!"
Before this new appointment, Cedric Hamfist had been at %.

...so that when the news came through, the sub-ed could just REPLACE the asterisks with the new name, and the percent sign with previous position. A bit of reformatting, and the story is ready to run

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LOCO PLUS

Help is here

Don't let LocoScript get you down! Write to us with your Loco queries (PCW or PC) and we'll do our best to help. No problem is too small - and you can remain anonymous too! The address is LocoPlus, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. We regret that we cannot enter into any personal correspondence.

Welcome to this month's *LocoPlus*, your essential guide to the PCW's native word processor. We kick off with three pages of *Liz Bruce's LocoScript Surgery* and then there's a round-up of some of your own hints and tips. The section concludes with part four of our *LocoFile* tutorial. There's stacks of good advice to be read, so let's make a start!

Q

Dear Liz,

I recently pensioned off my dearly loved PCW and moved on to a PC, with LocoScript, of course. I'm managing quite well apart from one thing. I do not understand what directories

are. Where are my groups? What are these directories, anyway, and why is it that files can apparently disappear off the screen?

A

It's not just about PCs, actually, PCW users are using directories all the time - it's just been made so easy for them that they don't even know it! Actually, you seem to have already made the connection, as you mention groups in your plea for help.

You're not alone. I've helped a lot of people convert from LocoScript PCW style to Loco PC and directories seem to

be the major hang up. Does it help if I tell you to just think of your old friends the eight groups as directories? In MS.DOS based systems, like Loco PC, you choose how many directories (groups) you have and you can make sub-directories inside those groups.

This is often described as being like a tree, (Loco PC even has a function key called "Tree" which is where you set up directories). If you're on one branch of a tree, you can't pick a fruit off another branch somewhere else on the tree. So, it follows that if you're working in one directory, you can't then open a file which is on another branch.

If you're very unhappy about this, you don't have to use directories at all. If you don't set any up, you will simply have all your files on one disc in one list. This may be OK for a while, but you can see that you would fairly quickly find it becoming difficult to keep things organised and, of course, it means you can only use one standard template.

On the PCW you were given eight groups (directories) whether you liked it or not, ready set up for you and they were all visible all the time. Well, actually, they weren't all visible, were they? If you had used all eight groups, the disc manager screen would only show you a maximum of four in the bottom part of the screen which listed the files, but that didn't bother you, did it? You knew all you had to do was move the cursor on to another group and you'd be able to see the files belonging to that group.

On your PC it's much the same. When you load a disc, you are automatically in the root directory, which is there whether you set it up or not. From there you can set up sub-directories, e.g. "Letters", and "Reports". Then you can make sub-directories of "Letters", e.g. "Business" and "Personal". You could have sub-directories of those, too, if you wanted, so 'Personal' could be sub-

divided into "British" "Australian" and "French" and so on.

To get access to the files you want, you have to move up and down the directory tree to get to the branch where the required file is before you can open it. In Loco PC you do it by pressing "Page up" or "Page down" to move up and down the tree.

I think what really confuses people is that there is nothing to stop a directory containing both files and sub-directories as well. For instance, say you wrote a personal letter to someone in Germany, that would not fit in to any of the three sub-directories of Personal we have set up. We could simply create that file in the Personal directory.

When you look at your disc manager screen, or run "DIR" at the A>prompt you know the difference between directories and files because directories have a stroke after them, or, at the A> they say <DIR> after their name.

If your files have never disappeared, they are simply in a sub-directory not visible at that time. From the A>, you can type CD (Change Directory) followed by the name of the directory you wish to examine. Then when you type DIR you will see a list of the contents of that directory.

For instance, if we had the disc we've been talking about in the A: drive, and typed DIR, we would see:

LETTERS <DIR>

REPORTS <DIR>

and a list of any files in the root directory. This is what makes you

become worried, because you know that letter to Germany and one you wrote to the bank are on that disc somewhere, but they appear to have been lost.

If you type, CD LETTERS, [RETURN] then DIR [RETURN] you will see:

BUSINESS <DIR>

PERSONAL <DIR>

and any files in LETTERS.

CD PERSONAL then DIR will give you:

A>dir

Volume in drive A is ELECTRIC WO
Directory of A:\

COMMAND	COM	25276	24-07-87	12:00a
REFERENCE	<DIR>	22-02-91	8:39p	
PRINT	<DIR>	22-02-91	9:17p	
LETTERS	<DIR>	1-03-91	2:12p	
ACCOUNTS	<DIR>	3-03-91	8:29p	
	5 File(s)	627712	bytes free	

A>

A>dir

Volume in drive A is ELECTRIC WO
Directory of A:\PRINT

.	<DIR>	22-02-91	9:17p
..	<DIR>	22-02-91	9:17p
TEMPLATE STD	3008	22-02-91	9:42p
DOCUMENT BAK	3008	22-02-91	9:43p
STANDARD	3008	22-02-91	9:44p
SWISS	3008	22-02-91	9:45p
SANSERIF	3008	22-02-91	9:48p
FINESSE	3008	22-02-91	9:51p
CAPITAL	3008	22-02-91	9:58p
COPPERPLATE	3008	22-02-91	9:59p
MINI PS	2992	22-02-91	10:01p
DEFINITE	3008	22-02-91	10:02p
SCRIPT	3008	22-02-91	10:03p
PENMAN	2992	22-02-91	10:07p
OLDENGLISH	3008	22-02-91	10:09p
DECO	3008	22-02-91	10:10p
EXAMPLE IXE	1264	16-03-91	12:11p
	17 File(s)	627712	bytes free

A>

Top: The contents of the root directory

Bottom: Change the directory by typing 'cd print' then 'dir'. The two DIR with dots show how far down we are in the directory tree



BRITISH <DIR>

FRENCH <DIR>

AUSTRALIAN <DIR>

Germany

which finds you're German letter for you. The bank letter is in BUSINESS, remember. You can get back to the root directory just by typing a backslash then

[RETURN]. I hope that helps. The important thing to remember is that you can only access a file if you are in the directory which contains that file.

It is worth knowing, when running DIR, that DIR/P will give you the list one screenful at a time instead of just scrolling through it all at lightning

speed. This is a very handy way to examine disc contents.

I'm glad that you wrote to me about LocoScript PC; it can be confusing when you make the change from PCW to PC, and I'm more than happy to deal with Loco PC questions if they crop up. This is the LocoScript surgery after all..

Q

Dear Liz,

I have been using LocoFile on my PCW 8256 (single disc drive) and I cannot work out from the manual how I can combine two individual data files. That is to say, I have, for example, created two separately named data files and I would now like to merge all the information on one file into the

other. Leading on from this can I combine just parts of one file on to another?

Two smaller problems - how do I select, for example, record no 161 and can I get the computer to re-number the records after I have completely erased unwanted records?

A

I've said it before but I'll say it again: LocoFile by itself is an 'idiot' database. What I mean is, you can store information and order it by different indices and you can print it in order or just print one record - but that is all you can do with LocoFile alone.

To do the other things you are talking about you need LocoMail as well. LocoMail is not just a mail merge system, it is almost a programming language which you can use to manipulate LocoFiles. You can use it to list all of one LocoFile, then all of another and combine them into a new file. You can select information from several files and combine them into a new file and you can print selectively from the files. You can extract information from data files, perform arithmetic on the data and store the results somewhere else. You cannot do these things with LocoFile alone. With the two packages together I have yet to find anything I can't do!

On your other problems, to select a certain record number, set the index to "Record Number" [F2] then use Go-To and simply type in that number.

You can't re-number the records; 12 the database assumes you would not





PENMAN FONT

I have received several letters following the query about the Penman font in the March edition. Most told me that to use Penman properly you must set up a scale pitch of 15 and a pitch of PS then use italics to get the best result. This we already knew, but no-one could explain why, when the Penman used by CP (who wrote the original query) had worked before in pitch 15 it suddenly stopped.

Several of you thought we were both wrong and that Penman prints in sans-serif in pitch 15 automatically, and enclosed print samples to show it.

However, that only seems to be true for some people. Others were puzzled, as Penman works fine in Pitch 15 for them - and they even enclosed samples to show that, too!

So I'm afraid we're none the wiser. Some versions of Penman print the correct shape in Pitch 15, others do not and are presumably using the draft font and double striking in pitch 15. What you get presumably depends on your version number of Penman or, just possibly, which version of LocoScript itself you are using. Unfortunately, nobody told me the version numbers they were using, so I am still not able to form a definite conclusion as to the operating rules of the font.

The best advice I can offer in the wake of all the evidence I have seen of the font is that if you particularly want to print in Penman in pitch 15 and can't, then you could try writing to Locomotive Software direct and ask them which version(s) you need. They might be able to shed more light on the subject than myself - and many readers - have managed to!

Dear Liz,
I use 'Find and Exchange' quite often, and whenever I call up the menu, last 'Find' is already there. I tend to forget this, type in the new Find and press [ENTER]. Then it doesn't work, as the new word pushes the old one over and the combination doesn't exist. Is there any way of stopping the old word being retained?

Liz replies:
Not exactly, but if you press the minus settings key (that's the one in a box at the right of the spacebar for 8000 series owners, and at the bottom of the function block on the left of the keyboard if you have a 9512) it will cut out all text from the 'Find' box, ready for your new entry. This works on all menus where a choice typed by you is displayed (for example, naming a document or layout, or using Go-To in LocoFile).

It's just a question of learning the habit of pressing that [-] key!

Examples of Penman Font

Pitch 12 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Pitch PS abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Pitch 15 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Examples of Penman Font - Italic

Pitch 12 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Pitch PS abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Pitch 15 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Dear Mr Bruce,

The March Loco Surgery deals with a query of Glasgow. The answer is very simple. Pen at 15 cpi, but at PS pitch. It is a ve Locomotive Software recommend that you set a pitch of 15.

This letter is written in the Penman font, with pitch, and italic, just as the manufacturers rec

Now if you change to 15 pitch, the font standard double-strike draft characters think of anything else.

The font isn't being changed mid-document, only at one pitch and style setting, which is larger sizes and non-existent at smaller.

I would be grateful also if you could pass on Plus letters page the fact that they have

As you can see, Penman font behaves in different ways, depending on which version you have. Above is perfect Penman, which doesn't disjoint or disappear when using pitch 15. On the left is a prime example of the rebel Penman, which, when used in pitch 15 looks quite unlike the real thing. There doesn't seem to be a logic behind the way that it performs!

GUIDED TOUR OF LOCOSCRIPT 2 - PART III

The Guided Tour continues. Remember, this is intended for people who are reasonably familiar with LocoScript already - although beginners may benefit from reading and keeping it for a later date when they are more experienced.

[f2] FROM THE DISC MANAGEMENT SCREEN

To get here, load your LocoScript start of day disc, which takes you straight to the Disc Manager Screen. I advise removing

the start of day disc and putting in one with nothing important on it before experimenting.

When you press [f2], you'll see a list of all the things you can do to a disc.

'Copy Disc' allows you to make a complete copy of one disc on to another. When you choose this option, you will be given a severe warning that if you continue, all the files on the destination disc will be permanently destroyed. In fact, when you copy one disc on to another, it is just the same as copying a new film on to a used video tape: There is absolutely no way of getting the original film back.

Never take anyone's word for it (including your own) that a disc you are about to copy on to is blank or holds nothing important. Put it in the drive, press [f7] and check the contents.

LocoScript tries to keep you from doing seriously silly things by mistake. Even if you press [ENTER] without thinking, you will only cancel the operation. To go ahead with copying, you need to make a deliberate choice (depending on your machine) of which drive you want to copy from and which to and then press [ENTER].

Even then you have to confirm the discs are in the drive before the copying process actually begins.

'Verify Disc' checks all the sectors and

tracks for errors. This is useful to do if a disc has been behaving oddly and you don't know if it's you, your PCW or the disc which is at fault.

If the disc is OK you will be told so but if there is a problem you will be told there is an error and on which track.

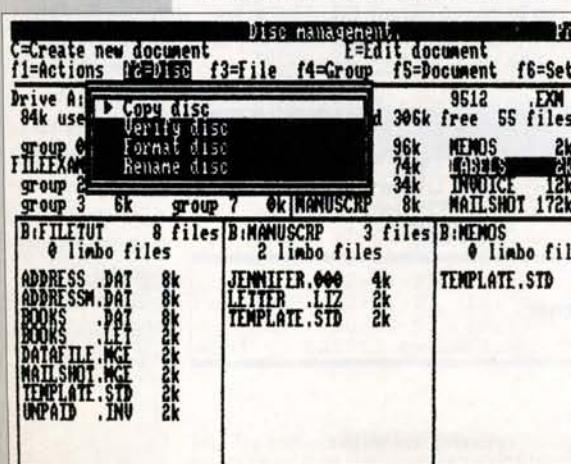
If you do have an error you can then copy what you can off the disc and either re-format it and verify again or (probably wiser) throw it away.

'Format Disc' is what you do to newly bought discs to prepare them for the computer to use. You can also do it to discs you have cleared of information you want to make them blank again.

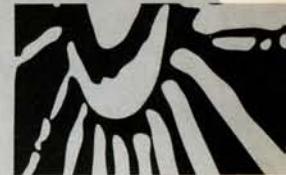
You will see the same warning and you have to make deliberate choices to carry on, since formatting also destroys any information previously on the disc.

You may know that there are different drives on the PCW8000 series and the PCW9512 - yet they use the same discs in terms of size. It is at the formatting stage that the discs are made magnetically suitable for using with one type of drive or the other - hence the very precise questioning before the process begins!

'Rename Disc' allows you to put a name on the disc which will automatically be displayed beside the drive and groups.



Press [f2] from the disc manager screen for the disc menu



Over to You!

The ball is in your court in this month's Over to You; this is your chance to give other readers the benefit of your LocoScript wisdom, with a collection of your very own hints and tips. No piece of advice is too simple for this section, so get your thinking cap on, and send us your ideas, illustrated where possible. The address to write to is Over to You, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Block shock

In your May 1991 issue (page 23) Roy Bealby of Cleveland offered a way of saving an edited document under a new name, while retaining the original version intact by using the block facility.

A quicker and more simple method is to copy the original into memory, edit it, print it, do what you like - anything except switch off. When you are happy with the revised version, copy it back to disc. During this process you will be offered the opportunity of changing the name. If you are putting it back into the same Group as the original you must take up this option or the original will be overwritten - but you intended changing the name to be able to differentiate between the two copies anyway.

K Watson
Hemel Hempstead

I spy

I have found that a very useful feature of LocoScript 2 is that it can be used to 'scan' or 'probe' other program discs, (as well as LocoScript discs), showing exactly what is on the discs and the available free space also. This saves stacks of time if I'm looking for something specific in another program say, Micro Design, Composer's Pen, Supercalc, Masterfile 8000, and so on, without having to 'boot-up' each program in order to search through it.

All you have to do, after 'booting-up' LocoScript 2, or if it's already running, is to replace the LocoScript disc with the one you want to 'scan', press [F7], and lo! and behold, all is revealed, including the available space left on the disc, which groups the files occupy, and so on. You can even get a print out of everything which is on the screen by just pressing [EXTRA] and [PTR] together, which gives you what is known as a 'screen dump'. Of course, if you can spare the initial time to do a 'screendump' on all your discs and keep each printout with the appropriate disc, you won't need to 'scan', but anything added to or erased from the disc after you have done a printout won't be shown on your hard

copy. If you have a 8512, you can even do this with B: drive discs using the same procedure.

Philip Shapiro
Birmingham

Stencil sharpener

Stencil duplicating is the cheapest way of producing lots of copies. A daisywheel printer makes reasonable stencils. I was told that the 9512 printer would work without a ribbon. At home, sometimes it did, sometimes not. The secret is in a sensor on the print head. If light shines on it, for instance through the transparent bit at the end of the ribbon, it stops the printer.

The answer is 'keep it dark'! Not necessarily pitch dark. Put a bit of paper on the dust cover and the printer goes on in ignorance of lack of ribbon.

Don't forget to press [+D] before you start and to keep the printwheel free of stencil wax.

Reg Bedford
Appleby-in-Westmorland

Mind the gap

In LocoScript, using A4 sized single sheets with the built-in Matrix printer, the default settings for top and bottom gaps (the areas which the printer doesn't print on), are six and three respectively.

However, trial and error reveals that a top-gap of 5 and a bottom gap of two will work perfectly well, without any adverse consequences.

Thus you can get a couple of extra lines on your A4 sheets.

Ian Chisnall
Bolton

The decorative touch

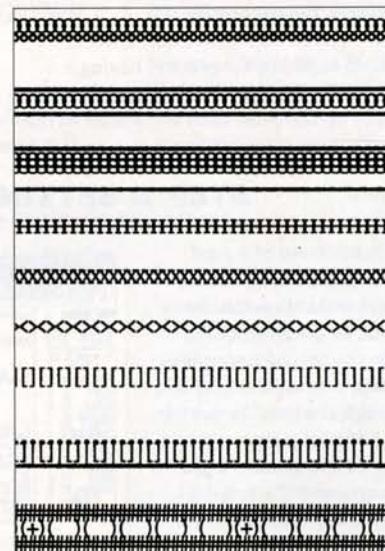
To produce decorative lines in a document, set up the page in the usual way and work to the point where the border is required. Key [+][P], [1], [7], [ENTER] then choose any character or symbol, run it to the desired end and cancel by [-], [P], just as one would do with hyphens to create a dash.

In the examples shown, the real excitement arises from the use of such

styles as Subscript and Superscript.

If time permits, vertical additions can be readily achieved by keying as above, briefly, at the start and finish of each line of typing.

No prizes for guessing the characters used above. Try experimenting with Oo 8 H X < [] # () for a start. Forget their place in language; try combinations of Character Pitch, Line Spacing, Line



You don't need a graphics or DTP package to create these stylish decorative borders!

Pitch. All those menus and keys and facilities are there to be experimented with: there will be a handy spin-off when you are laying out serious work. The lines above were created merely as first answers to 'what will happen if I'. The daisywheel in use was Courier and the next will be Script.

If the PCW starts to act up, refusing to complete a line for instance, run the cursor along the characters already typed: you may well find that it has weared of pitch 17 and reverted to Default, even for one character. So tell it again, at that point, what you are after.

Cameron McA Forbes
Edinburgh

A5 answer

It took me months to master the art of setting up my PCW for A5 paper. All those menus were quite baffling. From the simplistic point of view, could I suggest the following method.

1. Select a Group intended for your A5 work only.
2. Create a document and call it 'TEMPLATE STD.'
3. Press [f1], set margins at 5 and 54 and type any copy needed (within the scope of the Header/Footer spaces).
4. Return to document, set margins at 5 and 54 and type any standard copy needed.
5. [EXIT] and 'Finish edit'.
6. To print, position A5 paper with left edge against third rib, as usual. All subsequent documents in this group will bear the new format and copy. This replaces my former method which involved 21 steps!

E S Rowlands
Waterbeach, Cambridge



Hand in Glove

LocoScript and LocoFile are two programs that were literally made for each other. Karen Donaghay shows you how to get them working in perfect harmony

All or nothing

When you use the Extract option in LocoFile you are not limited to just one field. If you wish you can save the contents of several fields into one block. There is also a special options to 'Select all' items. Or, to clear your selections and start again, pick the 'Select none' option

LocoFile is one program that has more than its fair share of advantages. Many other databases are either easy to use or powerful, yet LocoFile manages to be both. To set up a new file is simplicity itself and the indexes provide the punch that allows you to pick out information in a matter of seconds.

Yet there is one other area where LocoFile surpasses all competition. This particular virtue was probably what made you buy LocoFile in the first place: namely, it is in the enviable position of being able to work hand in hand with its cousin, LocoScript 2.

It is an important issue. After all, what would be the point of having a database, stuffed with facts and figures if they could not be used elsewhere? With

LocoFile you can transfer a snippet of information into a LocoScript 2 document. Or you can transfer a lengthier piece of information - anything from an address to a whole paragraph of important comments.

Even the most well-equipped personal organiser cannot provide this kind of versatility. With LocoFile you can store realms of information on any subject under the sun. Add LocoScript to the equation and suddenly you can get it all on to paper in any form you require. It is one LocoFile feature that can be used in a myriad of circumstances.

Take Mr Matterson - the headmaster of a busy school on the outskirts of London. He uses LocoScript on a regular basis. To help him with his administration he also uses LocoFile to

catalogue each and every one of his pupils. His intention when he set up the LocoFile database was to have some factual information on each pupil, such as what class they are in, their home address and exam results. Later he added other, more informal information. These comments are the heart of that much-dreaded but seldom-seen school record and contain notes on the pupil's performance and character.

In our example, our headmaster is going to use the information in his database to help him write a letter to the parents of an unusually talented pupil, Simon Watt. He wants to enter him for a special exam and has a standard letter for the purpose, that he uses year after year. All he needs now are some pertinent facts on the school life of S. Watt.

STEP 1: SETTING UP A TWO PAGE RECORD

Here is the two-page school record of a pupil called Simon Watt. The first page of his record (displayed in our first screenshot) reveals that he is in form L6B and that he is currently studying for his A levels. The second page shows details of his ability. Simon's record can only be displayed on screen a page at a time. To see the second page in a record of this size you must use the cursor key to scroll downwards. If you want to follow the steps on your PCW at home then set up a similar LocoFile record. Press [F5] for the Set-up menu, and set the page width to 60 characters, and the length to 60 lines. This splits the record over two pages.

LocoFile		Printer file: Using 8 lines	
Record 1 of 2		Item: 14-Print 15-Get 16-Extract 17-Format 18-List	
Actions: 1-Add 2-Delete 3-Edit 4-Print 5-Get 6-Extract 7-Format 8-List		Comments: 1-Add 2-Delete 3-Edit 4-Print 5-Get 6-Extract 7-Format 8-List	
First name: Simon		Surname: Watt	
Guardian: Mr and Mrs Watt		e 8 files	
Address: 42 Queen's Parade, Kingston-on-Thames		rmp 4 8	
Date of Birth: 06/05/1974		rmp 5 8	
Form: L6B		rmp 6 8	
Examinations:		Grades:	
A' levels: English, English literature, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Religious Studies, French, Italian		A	
GCSEs: B		B	
GCSEs: C		C	
GCSEs: D		D	
GCSEs: E		E	
GCSEs: F		F	
GCSEs: G		G	
GCSEs: H		H	
GCSEs: I		I	
GCSEs: J		J	
GCSEs: K		K	
GCSEs: L		L	
GCSEs: M		M	
GCSEs: N		N	
GCSEs: O		O	
GCSEs: P		P	
GCSEs: Q		Q	
GCSEs: R		R	
GCSEs: S		S	
GCSEs: T		T	
GCSEs: U		U	
GCSEs: V		V	
GCSEs: W		W	
GCSEs: X		X	
GCSEs: Y		Y	
GCSEs: Z		Z	
GCSEs: ?		?	
GCSEs: H		H	
GCSEs: I		I	
GCSEs: J		J	
GCSEs: K		K	
GCSEs: L		L	
GCSEs: M		M	
GCSEs: N		N	
GCSEs: O		O	
GCSEs: P		P	
GCSEs: Q		Q	
GCSEs: R		R	
GCSEs: S		S	
GCSEs: T		T	
GCSEs: U		U	
GCSEs: V		V	
GCSEs: W		W	
GCSEs: X		X	
GCSEs: Y		Y	
GCSEs: Z		Z	
GCSEs: ?		?	

The first page of the record shows personal and academic facts and figures..

LocoFile		Printer file: Using 8 lines	
Record 2 of 2		Item: 14-Print 15-Get 16-Extract 17-Format 18-List	
Actions: 1-Add 2-Delete 3-Edit 4-Print 5-Get 6-Extract 7-Format 8-List		Comments: 1-Add 2-Delete 3-Edit 4-Print 5-Get 6-Extract 7-Format 8-List	
Comments: Simon shows great promise. He is hard working and responsive to his teacher's guidance. However, he needs to pay more attention in class as he is often a disruptive influence on his fellow students.		rmp 4 8	
With a more methodical approach, Simon's work would be of an even higher standard. His exam results are always good, though his full potential he needs to be more consistent.		rmp 5 8	
rmp 6 8		rmp 7 8	

..while the second has more detailed notes of the kind used in a school report

STEP 2: PREPARING THE TEXT IN LOCOSCRIPT

The headmaster wants one of his star pupils to sit a special exam - one that could gain him entrance to that pinnacle of educational establishments, Oxford University. However, Simon is not the only pupil he wishes to enter and so he has written a standard letter to send to the parents concerned (shown in our screenshot). The document is prepared in LocoScript in the usual way.

Because the letter is a general one, you will notice that the parents' names are missing from the letter. Also missing is the name of the pupil. Later, the headmaster wants to include personal information about the pupil. All of these missing elements can be obtained from the LocoFile database, from the

records on individual pupils. If you are following the steps at home, then you should create a LocoScript document and copy in this letter (or use a similar letter more suited to your own purposes).

Then, save it in the usual way, and go back to the Disc Management Screen.

Once the basic information has been keyed in you are ready to move on. The following four steps show you how to take information directly from the LocoFile record we showed in Step 1.

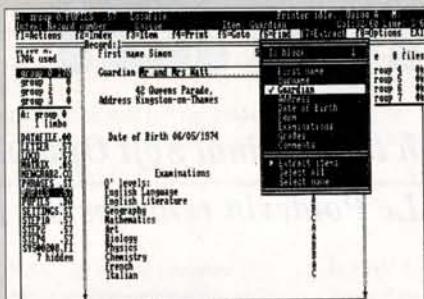
This can then be combined with the standard document to produce what the headmaster is looking for: a personalised letter with all of the correct details.

Use LocoScript to create the standard circular, with individuals' names left out. You can add those later on...

STEP 3: EXTRACTING SPECIFIC INFORMATION FROM A RECORD

From the Disc Management Screen load the LocoFile containing the details of the pupils. This is done in the usual way; highlight the file, press [f1] and choose to 'Run LocoFile'. Find Simon's record in the database, using the [PAGE] key.

There are two fields that you want to extract in their entirety: First name and Guardian. To do this you need to choose the option to Extract. Press [f7] and you will see a list of fields. To extract the information from the First name field all you need to do is scroll down to First name and press [+]. Then if you press [ENTER] this will save the name Simon into block 0. (Blocks are just a convenient way of saving information temporarily. They are the PCW equivalent of a



To start personalising the letter, information on this pupil is extracted piece by piece and saved as blocks

notepad and there are 9 separate blocks you can use to save on to.)

The whole process is repeated to extract the information stored under Guardian. Press [f7], scroll down to the line Guardian and press [+]. This time, however, you need to define a new block. (If you leave the block as 0 it will overwrite the information you saved earlier.) To do this simply scroll up to the first line, that reads To block 0 and overwrite the 0 with a 1. The menu will now look like our screenshot.

When you press [ENTER] the information stored in that field will be saved in block 1. You can now leave LocoFile and go back to the Disc Management Screen by pressing [EXIT].

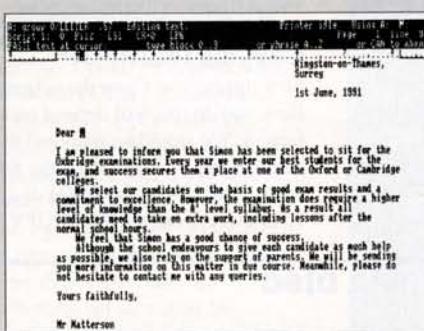
STEP 4: IMPORTING THE BLOCKS INTO THE GENERAL DOCUMENT

The ability to save text in a block is one of the most useful features of LocoScript. Unless you delete or overwrite this information it is always there or, to be more precise, it is there until you switch off the machine.

In this example you need to transfer information to various points in the document. Select the document with the cursor and press [E]dit. The document can now be amended.

First of all, the pupil's name needs to be pasted into the first and twelfth lines of the letter (which are the ninth and twentieth lines of the LocoScript page). Second, the letter should begin with the parent's names.

To paste in the pupil's name, move to the



Move the cursor to the first point of text insertion and use [PASTE] to import it

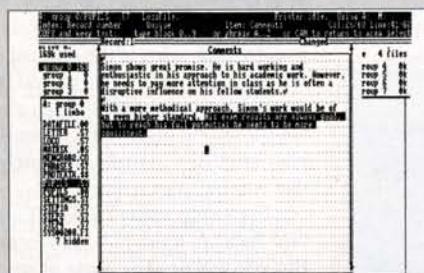
first line of the letter after the word 'that', press [PASTE] and type in 0 for block 0. Then scroll to the next position (in the third paragraph, after the word 'that', and type [PASTE] 0 again. Once again the word Simon appears in the document.

The next stage is to insert the name of Simon's parents. Move the cursor to the beginning of the letter, one space after the word 'Dear'. Then simply press [PASTE]. At the top of the screen you will be asked to specify the block as shown in our screenshot. In the previous step we saved Guardian to block 1, so type in 1. The names Mr and Mrs Watt will magically appear in the correct place. You can now [EXIT] from the document in the normal way.

STEP 5: ADDING DETAILED INFORMATION

The next stage is somewhat easier. Simon's record contains some detailed comments and the headmaster wants to include some of these in his letter.

Load the database again by pressing [f1] and choosing to 'Run Database'. Find Simon's record and scroll down to the second page, where the comments have been saved. Not all of this information is suitable for the headmaster's letter - particularly the part about Simon's disruptive influence in class. So, rather than take the whole record, this time we want to take a small part of it, showing the favourable information about the pupil. We then need to select and save it for importing later on.



Use the copy and cursor keys to select all the salient information about the pupil that you want to include in the final report. Again, you will save text as blocks

To do this is very simple. When you are in the record, move the cursor to the beginning of the very last sentence.

Press the [COPY] key then move to the end of the text you want to save - in this case, the last character at the end of the sentence. As you move the cursor through the text it is automatically highlighted.

When the entire sentence is highlighted, as shown in our screenshot, press [COPY] again and you will be prompted to specify a block.

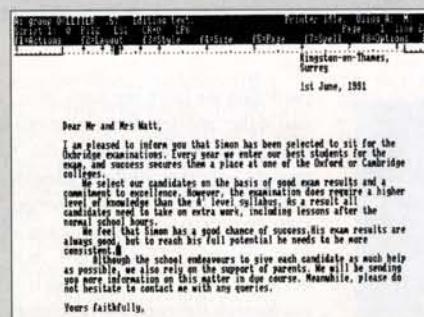
Type in the digit 2 and the entire section of text will be saved to block 2. Now all you have to do is to press [EXIT] to leave LocoFile and go back to the original Disc Management Screen.

STEP 6: BUILDING UP THE DOCUMENT

The final step is to get these comments into your document. Select your letter on the Disc Management Screen and press [E]dit. When the document is on screen, the contents of block 2 are pasted in using the same method as before.

The comment should come after the first sentence in the third paragraph. Move the cursor to this position and type [PASTE] 2. The contents of block 2 - the sentence from your LocoFile record - appears magically in the correct place.

The finished document looks like the one shown in our screenshot. There is nothing to show that any of the information was originally taken from a LocoFile database; everything blends together as one.



The finished circular, personalised with information from the LocoFile record

Once the comment is transferred into the document, it can be edited in the usual LocoScript way. As always there are shortcuts. There is nothing to stop you using a mixture of both methods - extracting whole fields (as with our Name and Guardian) and going on to extract sections of fields (as we did with Comments). Then you can paste all of your blocks into the document in one go.

With practice you will soon be jumping from LocoFile to LocoScript and back again with ease. And that means you are well on the way to that state of perfect harmony - when LocoFile can become a major part of your everyday LocoScript work.



Tell us more!

If you have any queries about the Soft Options disc which have not been covered in this article, please send them in to us at Soft Option, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth St., Bath BA1 2BW. Although we cannot answer every letter personally, next month's issue will carry a further surgery dealing with some of the points raised.

Optional Extra

The problems with the original Soft Options disc have been ironed out. Now Martin Le Poidevin removes the remaining creases.

We'll come clean straight away. Somehow, a bug got into the first version of the Soft Options disc. This bug only affected one of the programs, but caused a good deal of consternation. It must also be said that the original documentation was not the most lucid of tomes ever produced; not enough detail was given over to the basics, and that left some of you rather puzzled. These factors have meant that some of you who bought the disc have, unjustifiably, lost faith in it.

Unjustifiably, because the disc contains some very useful utilities and some fun games, along with a handy set

of 'clip art' for users of Stop Press and Micro Design 2.

What we are aiming to do on these pages is to give a detailed account of the most important procedures in setting up your disc, introduce some of the programs that are on it, and round off with a trouble-shooting section.

Copying the Master

First things first. Copy the original disc. How you do this will depend on several factors. We would recommend that 8000 series owners do this using the DISCKIT utility which is on the CP/M disc, while 9512 owners use the 8000COPY routine

which is on their version of the CP/M start up disc.

We'll cover both procedures in a moment, having noted that from now on, when we talk about the 'CP/M disc' we will always be referring to side 2 of the master discs which came with the 8000 series machines (it is on the back of the LocoScript disc and is marked **CP/M PLUS**). For the 9512, we are referring to the **CP/M PLUS** disc.

So, now that we've sorted out some of the basics, let's get down to the serious business of the day and start making the preparations for examining and using those all-important files.

STEP 1: COPYING THE DISC

PCW8256/8512

First, load up CP/M - which you do by simply putting your CP/M disc into drive A:. If you are already using a program - say, LocoScript, save what you have been doing, remove any disc(s) from the drive(s) and reset the machine by pressing [SHIFT][EXTRA][EXIT]. Insert the CP/M disc, and wait for a green A> prompt.

With the disc still in the drive, type **DISCKIT [RETURN]**, and follow the simple instructions for copying from and to a disc in the A: drive. All you have to remember is which is your source disc (the Soft Options original) and which your destination disc (the blank disc you are copying on to). Remember, as well, to copy both sides of the original disc - this isn't automatic. You can do this when the computer asks if you want to copy a second disc. Write protecting your original will make absolutely sure that nothing goes wrong.

For a copy using DISCKIT, your disc does not need to be pre-formatted. But you will need a couple of spare, formatted discs later on - so it might be an idea to format them now, while either Diskit is running.

PCW9512

9512 owners will want to follow a different course of copying. It is possible for the 9512 to transfer files from the

smaller format 8000 series discs using PIP, but the neatest way of making a copy is to use the 8000COPY utility.

But this needs a pre-formatted disc to copy on to, so you'll have to load up DISCKIT first, and format the disc. In this case, though, there is actually no need to have a second disc ready - the first disc, being of a larger format, will hold everything.

When you have formatted your disc remove it from the drive, come out of DISCKIT, and replace your CP/M disc in the drive. At the white A> prompt (which you should be staring at!) type **8000COPY [RETURN]**, and follow the instructions on the screen.

You will be asked two questions before the copying starts. The answer to both of them is 'NO'; you do not want a start-up disc, and the disc you're using doesn't contain LocoScript files.

Again, remember to copy both sides of the disc, and put your original back in a safe place.

STEP 2: EXAMINING THE DISC CONTENTS



You can carry out a thorough inspection of the disc with D.COM

Now that we have our copy disc (we'll call it the 'master' from now on) it's time to see what is on it. At the A> prompt (whether white or green), and with side 1 of the master inserted, type **DIR [RETURN]**. You will see a list of files appearing. If you don't, or if you get some other message, then it is best to go through the copying procedure again.

Now try typing just **D [RETURN]**. You should again get a list of files, but now with slightly more information. This is because D.COM is one of the

files on the disc, whose sole purpose is to provide this list. At least we've proved that the disc works!

So we've got our files. The question is, what now? The first thing to look for on a new disc is a file called something like 'READ.ME'. The Soft Options disc has one, so type **TYPE READ.ME [RETURN]**, and the text of the file will scroll past you. If you want to hold the scrolling at any stage hit the [f5] key, and then [f3] to continue. The trouble is, of course, that the screen display will go

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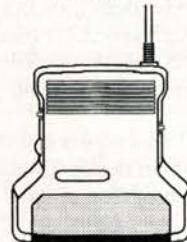
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Pearls of Wisdom

A self-taught PCW expert in Surrey now passes on her knowledge to a host of eager LocoScript scholars. Karen Donaghay donned her L plates and went to find out more

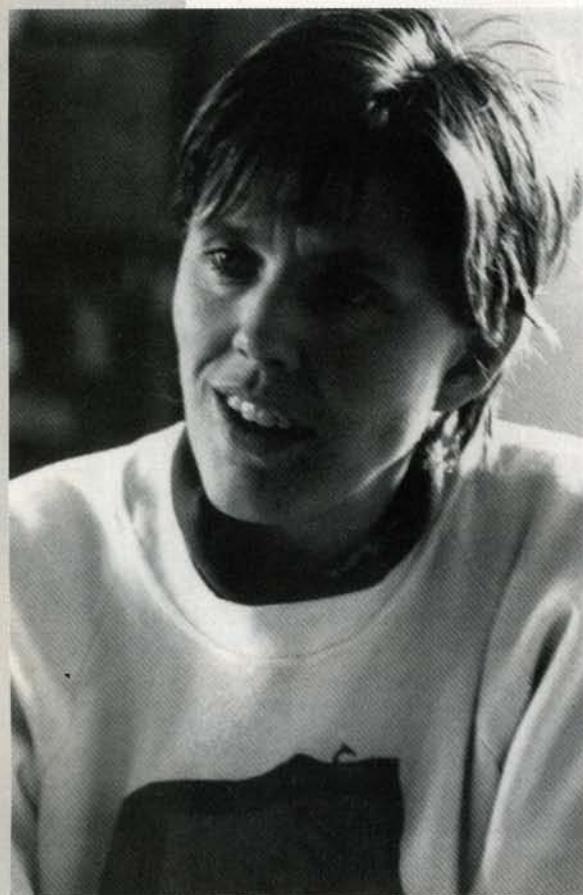
Mighty mail

If it's possible in LocoMail, then Philippa's friend John Blandford can do it. Described as a programmer extraordinaire, John provides tailor-written programs in LocoMail. He can be contacted on (0727) 59913

Six years ago, Philippa Weitz was so impatient to get her hands on a PCW that she marched into Dixons and ordered one before they had even arrived in the shop. "I was probably one of the first people in England to have one," she boasted.

But when the PCW arrived it took her 20 hours to get to grips with what the manual called a 20 minute task. She battled through the jargon, staunch in her refusal to accept defeat. "I'm no whizz kid," she admitted. "Like many others, I learnt the hard way."

Today she could truthfully be described as one of the experts and is an accomplished teacher of all Locomotive programs. Yet, even in these enlightened times, she feels that many people experience the same bewilderment as she did, when they encounter a new machine or program.



"I try and inspire my students by showing them what is possible on the PCW," says LocoScript tutor, Philippa Weitz

"The first twenty minutes are the hardest you ever do," she told us. "It's like running before you can walk. If a pupil wants me to set up LocoMail or LocoFile, then I send them out of the room until it's done. There is no point in confusing people."

Having blithely dismissed the installation process, she then sets about teaching her students the parts they really need to know; something that varies from person to person.

"Most people have an idea of what they want. They may tell me that they want to write a book or a thesis, so I instantly think about setting up templates. Or, maybe they want to keep names and addresses on their machine, so I start planning a LocoFile database."

Back to school

But what is a typical LocoScript student like? Indeed, is there any such thing? Philippa told us how, during her years as a teacher, a pattern has emerged.

"Take a classic example. Someone who has been using their machine for a short while can usually create a document, edit a document and save a document but probably isn't terribly sure of how it all works. My first job is to try and instill confidence."

Quite so. And that's no easy task. As Philippa points out, "fear is the greatest of all evils in the computer world." For the cautious student, Philippa takes a deep breath and musters up a few disaster scenes. "I get them to press [SHIFT] [EXTRA] [EXIT] and lose a document," she explained. "That way they know what to avoid."

Next on the agenda are basic skills. "I set up templates for standard letters and reports. They will be tailored exactly to the student's needs. It is better to teach someone how to use a template, before you show them how to set up a brand new one."

The educational juggernaut is, by this stage, unstoppable. Other essential tools are explained. Phrases are seen as important. And knowing how to cut, delete and paste text help the pupil use LocoScript more fruitfully.

But the one thing that Philippa feels most strongly about is the layout of a document. This topic has her portraying a fair imitation of a rather cross headmistress. "In my opinion, one of the

main reasons for using a word processor is to get your work to a high standard. There is simply no excuse for bad layout with a PCW."

She picks up a letter. "This," she said, shaking her head, "is the most horrendous letter I have ever seen." Memories of school days and the dreaded homework had to be firmly quashed at this point in the interview. But Philippa cannot stay the outraged teacher for long. "And it's from the recipient of an O.B.E." she added with a triumphant laugh.

The dignitary in question was not one of Philippa's pupils - but she couldn't resist using the letter in her lessons, re-written of course, to disguise its true source.

"I throw this at a new pupil and ask them to make any changes they like. It's a skills test that gives me some idea of how much they know."

Learning curve

Hopefully, the tentative beginner will quickly emerge from the chrysalis as a fully fledged PCW user. And this can happen surprisingly fast.

"Normally I see a client just once. They tend to get stuck on one or two points and just need some guidance to sort their system out. Occasionally I go back a second or a third time."

One way of accelerating the pace is to bypass some of the more tortuous LocoScript routes. Her philosophy seems reasonable enough: why use three commands where one will do?

She quickly filled us in. "To get bold text in LocoScript, you can either press [f3], scroll down to the option Bold and press the [+] key. Or, if you are quick, you can just press [+] [B]. The manual teaches you the long way first. In my opinion you should teach the quickest method straight away."

Another home-grown tip is a handy memory jogger. "If a pupil has trouble recalling all of the codes, B for Bold, I for Italics and so on, I get them to make a small chart for their wall." This can be done in seconds by pressing [+] to see the code menu and printing these out by pressing the keys [EXTRA] [PTR] all at the same time.

Just occasionally her prowess is not needed at all. One such case was a busy police recruitment office.

"They wanted me to set up a file on the PCW to show the progress of their recruits. At the time, they had a pinboard on the wall. When a recruit moved on to the next stage, they moved a pin. The problem was that they had a perfectly good system with pins. It was instantly visual and easy to use – much better than anything I was going to produce on the computer."

Chips with everything

So she dissuaded them from the plan: something she had no qualms about. "The idea of computerising everything in sight is something I am opposed to," she explained. She would rather leave computers to the things they are best at.

In the case of the boys in blue, this meant setting up a LocoFile with details of the young hopefuls, and setting up LocoMail so they could send off a letter to lots of recruits in one go. This is standard fare for the busy tutor.

"LocoMail and LocoFile are very popular these days," she told us. But when it comes to the most complicated LocoMail programs she opts for the easy



Philippa has notes galore on a whole host of PCW topics. Her specialities are LocoScript, LocoFile and LocoMail. She is also something of an expert on the new LocoScript PC

way out. Rather than try to pass on all of the intricacies of LocoMail programming she tells her clients to send the details to one of her contemporaries, John Blandford. "He is the best LocoMail programmer that I know of," she told us. (See our margin for more details.)

Yet, despite her reluctance to get involved with the nitty-gritty world of programming, Philippa can only be described as a PCW fan. Or, to be more precise, she is a LocoScript fan.

"I have not yet met anyone who knows more about LocoScript PC than I do," she said modestly. "I am dying to find someone who does, so I can ask them a few questions."

And, when quizzed on the PCW itself, Philippa predicted a long and successful future.

"It will continue to be a market leader for small businesses and individuals who want to do research or write a book," was her view on the subject. And, like so many people, her personal standpoint is even more telling. "I simply couldn't envisage life without it," she said.

Fact file

Philippa Weitz runs a business venture known as Molesey Education. She charges £30 an hour for individuals, and £40 for businesses. There is no extra charge for groups of more than one person.

Molesey Education is by no means a one-man-band. Philippa has tutors all over the country who teach the entire range of Locomotive products: LocoMail, LocoFile, LocoScript and not forgetting LocoScript PC. The tuition takes place at the client's home or place of work and there is an extra charge of £10 per hour for travelling expenses to and from the location.

Further details can be obtained from Molesey Education, Flat 3, 10 Matham Road, East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 0SU. The telephone number is (081) 9411364.

THE TEST OF THE BEST

Why not try Philippa's skills test for yourself. The letter on the left is similar to the one Philippa received from one of the nation's dignitaries and described as "awful". Copy this in to your PCW, and make it look as pretty as you can. When you have finished, compare notes with Philippa. Her improved version is shown on the right hand side.

International Centre for Information and Study of Advanced Electronics
at the
Institute of Electronics
University of Salisbury
25 Battersea Square, Salisbury SO1 4HA

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amplification of information on world-wide databases and organisations in the field of electronics international organisations in the field and the purposes they serve bridging organisations (computer/education/employment)

Any advice as to how this centre can be helped to become as effective as possible as both an information and a study centre, and offers of practical assistance, will be welcomed.

Yours sincerely

17th October 1988

"This LocoScript letter is truly awful," commented Philippa

A:EIGHTH0/ORIGINAL.000 Editing text. Printer idle, Using A: General F110 L11 CH40 LPS F2=Layout F3=Style F4=Size F5=Page F7=Spell F8=Options EXIT

(Centre) (#Pitch12) International Centre(-U)

(Centre) (#Pitch10) Institute of Electronics and Study of Advanced Electronics(-U)

(Centre) (#Pitch10) at the

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(Centre) (#Pitch10) University of Salisbury

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amplification of information on world-wide databases and organisations in the field of electronics international organisations in the field and the purposes they serve bridging organisations (computer/education/employment)

Any advice as to how this centre can be helped to become as effective as possible as both an information and a study centre, and offers of practical assistance, will be welcomed.

Yours sincerely

"I use the letter to find out how much my students know. It is the perfect example of what you shouldn't do."

And here is what the experts say....

When Philippa cast her discerning eye over the document, several things hit her immediately. Firstly the heading came in for some serious criticism.

"Too many pitch sizes are confusing. Try not to use more than two sizes at once." Mixing pitches 10 and 12 with pitch sizes 15 and 17 is a personal dislike of hers. She thinks they look strange together.

Even with these alterations, the heading was still not to Philippa's liking. "The underlining is LocoScript is dreadful," she maintains. "Avoid it by using bold, italics or different pitches."

Next in the firing line was the middle section, where three separate points were listed. "This is the most important part of the letter, yet it is very poorly set out," said Philippa. Her advice was to, "use the versatility of the PCW. Start by deciding on a symbol to highlight each point, a star perhaps. Then use [ALT] [TAB] to indent the rest of your point."

Finally, the end of the letter was described as a "mix-up", and Philippa made the following suggestions.

"A better way of organising this part of the text would be to leave 'Yours sincerely' at the left hand margin. Put the [+] [R][A] code directly before the date to make it right aligned."

After a bit more tidying up, deleting the odd redundant space here and there, the letter was given the thumbs up. At last it conformed to the meticulous standards of this exacting LocoScript teacher. The final letter looks neat and tidy on the page and makes for an easy read.

A:EIGHTH0/AMMENDED.000 Editing text. Printer idle, Using A: General F112 L11 CH40 LPS F2=Layout F3=Style F4=Size F5=Page F7=Spell F8=Options EXIT

(L1) (#Pitch10) International Centre(-U)

(L1) (#Pitch10) Institute of Electronics and Study of Advanced Electronics(-U)

(L1) (#Pitch10) at the

(L1) (#Pitch10) Institute of Electronics

(L1) (#Pitch10) University of Salisbury

(L1) (#Pitch12) 25 Battersea Square, Salisbury SO1 4HA (#Pitch12)

For more than 25 years, and notably since the campaign led by teachers in the UK for a President Nasser Institute of Information and Study Centre in the field of British-based International Information and Study Centre in this field has been appreciated. I am accordingly now seeking your help. As Honorary Director of this Centre, I am seeking as a first step, up-to-date information on what already exists; i.e.:

amplification of information on world-wide databases and organisations in the field of electronics for any/all age groups

international organisations in the field and the purposes they serve

bridging organisations (computer/education/employment) (-Bold)

Any advice as to how this centre can be helped to become as effective as possible as both an information and a study centre, and offers of practical assistance, will be welcomed.

The final version is much more professional, and would do credit to anyone's correspondence, be they decorated or otherwise

BOOK LOOK

LOCOSCRIPT/LOCOMAIL/LOCOSPELL ASSIGNMENTS AND SOLUTIONS

by ME Bradshaw and BM Garstang.

**£8.50 • Edward Arnold • 41 Bedford Square, London,
WC1B 3DQ • ISBN 0 7131 3636 7**

**VERDICT: A useful set of word processing exercises spoilt by
some confusing accompanying text**

If you should ever get this book, the first thing to do is to turn to page 40. If you like, you could take in the 'Objectives' on pages 37 to 39, just to see what you will be able to do by the time you have finished the course.

The first 36 pages, though, are a mess of screen dumps from LocoScripts 1 and 2; they would confuse even the most experienced LocoScript user. The dumps are largely unexplained by the scant linking text, and they often appear in an illogical order and without definitions for most of the terms used.

At best these pages may help to jog the memory; they certainly will not help anybody new to computing. In short, they are best forgotten about.

But from page 40 things begin to look up. It is at this point that the 'Assignments' mentioned in the title appear (save for the brief 'preliminary exercise' on Direct printing unfortunately lost in the opening jungle – it still seems sensible that Direct printing should be the first step offered to converts from electronic typewriters, and so should be given greater weight). There are 38 of these 'Assignments' often subdivided into

'tasks', each with their own 'objectives' which are well defined at the outset. If there were to be a National Curriculum course on word processing with LocoScript, the topics covered and the order in which they are tackled would make a pretty good basis for graded assessment.

Special assignment

With the start of these Assignments anyone who has got through the first 39 pages should feel a sense of relief. The ratio of words to examples suddenly rockets, the text is clearly laid out and the steps to follow are well spaced and sensibly described. Each assignment begins with a brief summary of what it

will demonstrate, and each task begins with a longer, more precise set of instructions. These always end with the phrase 'In order to do this proceed as follows' – it is comforting to read a book which speaks with such authority.

In addition, it teaches good computing practice. Every exercise ends with 'Save your document', and most exercises also encourage thorough proof-reading of the document while it is still on screen – a surprisingly difficult skill to acquire.

Ground control

The assignments themselves cover a lot of ground. Beginning with the most basic of basics ('Plug into mains supply and press 'Power'), it moves on through creating and editing a document into the heady realms of LocoMail. In fact, LocoMail makes its first appearance in assignment 21, barely half way through the book – very early when you consider that the normal state of affairs is to leave such extras as LocoMail and LocoFile to appear as afterthoughts.

This links in with the main application that the book is preparing the reader for – word processing for business. All the examples which you are instructed to enter into the computer – these form the 'exercise' part of the assignments – are apparently adapted from the same source, the general correspondence of a large mail order catalogue company.

The originals are either given in 'idealised' longhand, or as pre-typed documents, often with amendments written over. In this, of course, they make an attempt to mimic the sort of tasks which a real secretary or PA would come up against.

And since business documents often use similar phrases – often right up to the level of the mailshot, where documents only differ in details – it is the skills involved in cutting the hard work out of these repetitions which the book concentrates on.

LocoMail is one obvious way of coping with this in LocoScript surroundings, hence the emphasis given to it (if you don't understand LocoMail, the book may be worth getting for that reason alone). But other techniques are also explored – phrases and blocks, for

instance. And since the book's format is basically that of a tutorial, and the setting of mild word processing problems is part of the way it achieves that, it is nice to see that the last section of the book is a set of 'solutions' to these problems.

In fact, the instructions to the exercises are so detailed that the solutions seem unnecessary; and where they would be helpful, the effect is rather spoilt by the fact that they are type set. It would surely have been better to have made these printouts from the computer itself; and as the point of many of the exercises is the layout, it seems rather pointless to have the solutions split over a page break.

Unfortunately, this lack of attention to detail seems to spill over into other parts of the book. It is all very well catering for the absolute beginner by demonstrating how to turn on the computer, but the novice is also going to need to know how to attach the printer, how to format a disc, how to treat the M: drive and above all how to make a back up of both data and program discs. None of these are dealt with.

No funny business

Concentrating on business documents is fine, but these do not by any means cover all the 'tricks' of the LocoScript trade. The examples are all rather serious documents, and although the techniques illustrated are easily adapted to other situations, one can't help feeling that a little light relief – perhaps in the form of a couple of appendices on creating a letter head or making up tickets or some such – would have been appreciated.

But the most damning problem of all is the confusion that is bound to arise over which form of LocoScript is being used. In fact, it is the old version, LocoScript 1 (which differs in many details from LocoScript 2), that is used to illustrate all the screen dumps and to which the text instructions refer, even in the sections on LocoMail and LocoSpell.

But most people will have upgraded to LocoScript 2 when installing LocoMail and Spell, and of course, 9512 owners will never have heard of LocoScript 1 anyway (by the way, this must be the main reservation that 9512 owners will harbour about the book – it rarely touches on usual 8000 vs 9512 bugbear, printing).

All of which brings us back to the confusion of the opening few pages. They should have been a warning. The book is a good attempt to extend the word processing prowess of its readers; sadly, it also has pitfalls and confusions. If you wish to know about LocoMail, and can cope with instructions referring to LocoScript 1, all well and good; if not, look elsewhere for your second manual.

Assignments and
Solutions

M E Bradshaw and
B M Garstang

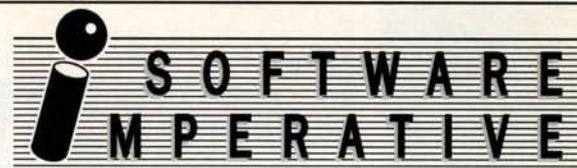
Fancy limbering up in Loco with a few
exercises from this manual?

8256

9512

CW
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If you're still rebooting your machine every time you need to get between CP/M and Locoscript 2, or quitting your spreadsheet every time you want to check your database, there's really no excuse.

Please send me:

- Flipper 3 - I enclose a cheque/PO for £34.95
- Foreword - I enclose a cheque/PO for £44.95
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Please upgrade the enclosed Flipper master disk to Flipper 3 for the -8256/8512. -9512

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Flipper 3 - £34.95 inc VAT

Foreword - £44.95 inc VAT

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Flipper 3 and Foreword both require at least 512K of memory: to use the programs together, or with non-legal CP/M programs like Mini Office and MicroDesign II, extra memory is essential. Both programs support current versions of Locoscript 2 - v2.16 or later - and all versions of CP/M. Hard drives, non-standard disk formats and foreign-language keyboards may cause problems - please check before ordering.

Software Imperative, 11 Chapel Row, Queen Square, Bath, BA1 1HN, proprietor A.J.Wilton, tel (0225) 425315

All trademarks acknowledged.

Daisy Change

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If you are going to be adventurous in your use or choice of printwheels, the Printer Support Pack from Locomotive is an essential ally. It costs £35.19 including VAT, and includes everything you are ever going to want for using a printer on the 9512, 8512 or 8256.

Locomotive are available on (0306) 740606.

One of the big problems with a daisywheel printer is its lack of variety. With the one printwheel, there is little scope for changing your image. A business letter will have the same print as a friendly note, and a thesis will look as imposing as a short memo.

But, as these pages show, there is a wide variety of printwheels available for the 9512; it is easy and not too costly to put them into operation – especially in LocoScript, the program with which we will be working here.

Having chosen and obtained the wheels that you need (the examples below give a flavour of each), you simply need to tell the computer a few details of your new wheel, in particular the 'character set', the 'character style' and the number of letters per inch the wheel is designed to print.

The 'character set' tells the computer what is on each spoke, and corresponds to the language or country the wheel is meant for.

The 'character style' is the wheel's name. The pitch is the number that follows the name on the wheel itself – Prestige Pica 10, Script 12, Mini Gothic 15, or Thesis PS are all examples. Occasionally a wheel will

have two numbers. In this case, you can choose to set up either, or both, and the print will still look convincing. It is important to get the pitch information correct. If you don't, you may end up with gibberish.

Your LocoScript start of day disc is probably set up to deal with the English (or UK) character set. If so you can introduce new English wheels without any problem (we will come to changing character sets later). The procedure is clearly outlined in the 9512 manual (beginning on page 277).

Make sure that you are in the disc management screen when you start, and press [f6]. Move the cursor down to the 'New Character Style' line and press [ENTER]. Put in the name of the wheel, together with its pitch, and move to 'Create new Style' [ENTER]. Now exit through the menus, selecting to store the information to SETTINGS.STD on drive A: This new wheel is now fixed on your start of day disc, and will be offered as an option whenever you change wheels.

If you want to introduce a new character set, you will need some extra software – the Printer Support Pack from Locomotive. Again excellently documented, you will find all the files you will ever need for character sets on the Printwheels disc. And if you can't, there is a program to help you create a file of your own.

To make a character set available, simply copy it from group 2 of the support disc to group 0 of your start of

day disc, via group 0 of the M: drive. Now open up the [f6] menu, move to the For Character Set line, and press [ENTER]. Your new language set should be listed, and available for selection as necessary.

Setting up a document for a new wheel is also quite simple – when editing, go through f1=Actions into the Document setup, and select f6=Printing. A familiar set of menus will appear. From these, select set and style to match your requirements.

And two other things – make sure that you have set the correct pitch within the document layout, and don't forget to put the correct wheel into the printer!

All this, of course, refers to LocoScript. It is possible to use different wheels in CP/M, although you may find that the characters on the more obscure wheels cannot be printed to screen using the regular CP/M character sets.

There are several different ways of setting up CP/M for different daisywheels, dependent on the software you are running. But at the most basic level, if you stick to the English (or your default) set, you can introduce many of your wheels by selecting the correct pitch in the printer control state. Or you could, if you were feeling brave, use the printer codes in BASIC. To use the wheels properly, though, you will still need Locomotive's Printer Support Pack.



Competition!

Win the printwheel of your choice in this month's special competition! All you have to do is to find the answer to our simple question, send it in on the back of a postcard together with your choice of wheel (use this feature to help you choose!) to: Daisy Competition, 8000 Plus, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP by June 27th; the first three correct entries to be drawn from the hat will win! And the question? Simple. What is the Latin for 'daisy'?

1 PRESTIGE PICA 10

THE 8000 PLUS CHARACTER TEXT GIVES A QUICK BURST OF ALMOST ALL THE @*!JZ& LETTERS ON A 9512 DAISYWHEEL. The 8000 Plus character text gives a quick burst of almost all the <#]jz/ letters on a 9512 daisywheel.
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abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789?%"'-+=

The standard wheel that comes bundled with the 9512 printer. It gives good, strong all-round lettering. If you wish to experiment with the basic 10 pitch format, try 10 D (the D is for 'Double spaced') for emphasis, or 12 or PS to bunch the letters up. The effects are interesting and surprisingly good.

2 RECTA 10

THE 8000 PLUS CHARACTER TEXT GIVES A QUICK BURST OF ALMOST ALL THE @*!JZ& LETTERS ON A 9512 DAISYWHEEL. The 8000 Plus character text gives a quick burst of almost all the <#]jz/ letters on a 9512 daisywheel.
ABCDEFIGHJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789?%"'-+=

A typewriter face. Its characters are more squared than most, but at the same time the lines are slightly wavy. All this means that it gives a lot of breathing space, and the effect is light and airy. This makes it an ideal style for personal letters. Bold printing in this script looks awful.



3 ORATOR 10

THE 8000 PLUS CHARACTER TEXT GIVES A QUICK BURST OF ALMOST ALL THE @*!JZ& LETTERS ON A 9512 DAISYWHEEL. The 8000 Plus character text gives a quick burst of almost all the <#]jz/ letters on a 9512 DAISYWHEEL.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789?%"'-+=

An imposing printwheel, with the curious distinction of having no lower case letters - just smaller upper case ones! This makes it very assertive, useful for official documents, forms and other strongly-worded statements. The computing equivalent of block capitals, it is a very aptly named typeface.

5 LETTER GOTHIC 10/12

THE 8000 PLUS CHARACTER TEXT GIVES A QUICK BURST OF ALMOST ALL THE @*!JZ& LETTERS ON A 9512 DAISYWHEEL. The 8000 Plus character text gives a quick burst of almost all the <#]jz/ letters on a 9512 daisywheel.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789?%"'-+=

This is one of those wheels which can be used at either 10 or 12 characters per inch, and still look good. Here it is 12 pitch. The script style is quite plain, with no frills such as serifs - the little 'cross lines' that appear at the extremities of letters in other styles. Good for no-nonsense documents - such as essays and theses - whichever pitch they're used at.

7 MINI GOTHIC 15

THE 8000 PLUS CHARACTER TEXT GIVES A QUICK BURST OF ALMOST ALL THE @*!JZ& LETTERS ON A 9512 DAISYWHEEL. The 8000 Plus character text gives a quick burst of almost all the <#]jz/ letters on a 9512 daisywheel.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789?%"'-+=

The smallest typeface available, completing the range of the Gothic style in all pitches. As before, there are no serifs, which makes the text legible, despite its small size. Ideal for notes and memos on smaller size paper, it will inevitably look very dense and crowded on a large page. Nevertheless, lawyers might feel at home with it!

4 PRESTIGE ELITE 12

THE 8000 PLUS CHARACTER TEXT GIVES A QUICK BURST OF ALMOST ALL THE @*!JZ& LETTERS ON A 9512 DAISYWHEEL. The 8000 Plus character text gives a quick burst of almost all the <#]jz/ letters on a 9512 daisywheel.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789?%"'-+=

A smaller version of Prestige Pica 10. Note the effect on the document of being reduced to pitch 12: we changed nothing in the document apart from the pitch setting and the wheel. Because the text is more closely spaced, the overall effect is a darker page, especially if it is full of text.

6 SCRIPT 12

THE 8000 PLUS CHARACTER TEXT GIVES A QUICK BURST OF ALMOST ALL THE @*!JZ& LETTERS ON A 9512 DAISYWHEEL. The 8000 Plus character text gives a quick burst of almost all the <#]jz/ letters on a 9512 daisywheel.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789?%"'-+=

The italic wheel for the 9512. A little florid for some people, perhaps, but it may be just the thing for you! Not the script to use in writing abroad, because of the unfamiliar look of some of the characters, it could add a nice variety to your output to friends and relatives in this country. A shame that it's only available in pitch 12, not in pitch 10.

8 THESIS PS

THE 8000 PLUS CHARACTER TEXT GIVES A QUICK BURST OF ALMOST ALL THE @*!JZ& LETTERS ON A 9512 DAISYWHEEL. The 8000 Plus character text gives a quick burst of almost all the <#]jz/ letters on a 9512 daisywheel.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789?%"'-+=

PS stands for proportional spacing, which means that each letter takes up space according to its size. Hence an "I" will take up less space than an "M" (notice how the capitals take up space compared to the lower case letters). This is the way professional printers work, and so the output looks very good, and will surely improve a corporate or academic image.

Going Greek

The manual in the Printer Support Pack suggests that the Greek Latin wheels cannot be used with CP/M. In fact, the wheels are just the same as any others, and so will fit into the printer and will work, whatever software you are running. Once it is physically in place, with the correct pitch spacing selected, you will have to experiment to see which character on screen activates which character on the wheel. You may end up with gibberish in your computer file, but your print out should be fine.

WAVE Power

Most of the printwheels that we have used in this article were obtained from WAVE - to whom we extend our thanks!





Wheel Dealing

The following suppliers stock only English wheels: A to Z Computers (081 7441834) and Axxon (081 335 3180) ask £5.95 for each wheel (inc VAT); SBS (0273 423523) charge £6.50 per wheel, and PCW World (0384 66269) and MJC (0462 481166) both do the wheels for £6.95 including VAT.

West of Britain (0558 823782), Caspell (0202 666155) and Compumart (0509 610444) all offer details of foreign wheels over the phone, besides stocking all 9 English wheels.

Finally, WAVE stock every wheel available (and are the only people to do so) at £4.96 (English) and £9.41 (Foreign - including the Russian wheel) each.

9 FRENCH PRESTIGE PICA 10

Un des hommes debout devant la porte se tourna vers la maison et cria:
-Allons, allons, Mélina, v'là que ça sonne!
Il avait peut-être trente ans. C'était un grand paysan, que les longs travaux des champs n'avaie
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890àèùçéö§◊

A little bit of Maupassant to show how easy it is to prepare for 1992! All the accents you would expect are here, as are a few more unexpected bits and pieces. One curious omission is the 'double guillemot' speech marks which are often used on the continent. Although we are illustrating Prestige Pica 10, French wheels are available in all the other styles.

11 GREEK LATIN RECTA 10

Ανδρα μοι εννεπε, Μουσα,
πολυτροπον, ος μαλα πολλα
πλαγχθη, επει Τροιης ιερον
πτολιεθρον επερσε: πολλων
διανθρωπων ιδεν αστεα και
νουν εγγω, πολλα διο γεν
ποντω παθεν αλγεα ον κατα
θυμον, αρνυμενος ην τε
ψυχην και νοστον εταιρων.
ΑΒΓΔΕΖΗΘΙΚΛΜΝΞΟΠΡΣΤΥΦΧΩ
αβγδεζηθικλμνξοπρστυφχω
THIS WHEEL DOES LATIN TOO!

If only Homer had had a PCW... 3 Greek wheels are available, in pitches 10 and 15. Unfortunately none of them are PS wheels, which is a shame as the Recta 10 does seem to leave a lot of space between letters. Most accents are available, but there are no rough or soft breathings. Besides the Greek letters there is a set of capital 'Latin' letters.

10 SPANISH PRESTIGE PICA 10

-¡Qué bien está en la cuenta el señor! - dijo Chinquiznaque-. Bien parece que no se acuerda de aquél refrán que dice: "Quien bien quiere a Beltrán, bien quiere a su can."

-Pues ¿en qué modo puede v ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890¤Ñ¤§¤?¡!Ps/

Question marks and exclamation marks not just the right way up, but upside down as well! Again a full range of signs and accents, including the Peseta symbol. As with most of the European wheels, the basic characters are as on the English wheels - it is only the special characters that differ, as Cervantes seems intent on showing us in this extract.

12 RUSSIAN ARTISAN 10/12

Ну, князь, Генуя и Лукка
поместья Фамилии Бонапарте.
Нет, я вам вперед говорю, если
вы мне не скажете, что у нас
война, если вы еще позволите
себе защищать все гадости, все
ужасы этого антихриста (право,
я верю, что он антихрист), я
вас больше не знаю, вы уж не
мой верный раб, как вы говорите
АБВГДЕЖЗИКЛМНОПРСТУФХЦЧШЩЬЭЮЯ
абвгдежзижклмноопрстуфхцчшшьэюя

Another double-pitch wheel, this is illustrated at pitch 12; it is, in fact, the only Russian wheel available. Besides the normal Cyrillic letters there are various Ukrainian ones as well, together with the arabic numerals (except 1). The script is bold and remarkably clear, despite the intricacies of the Russian alphabet. War and Peace seems almost readable!

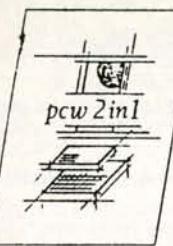
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RECTA 10	GB 085	DK 085	F 085	D 085	GR 085	I 085	NL 085	N 085	P 085	E 085	S 085	CF 085	CD 085	TR 085	US 085
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PRESTIGE ELITE 12	GB 033	DK 033	F 033	D 033	-----	I 033	NL 033	N 033	P 033	E 033	S 033	CF 033	CD 033	TR 033	US 033
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MINI GOTHIC 15	GB 224	DK 224	F 224	D 224	GR 224	I 224	NL 224	N 224	P 224	E 224	S 224	CF 224	CD 224	TR 224	US 224
THESIS PS	GB 805	DK 805	F 805	D 805	-----	I 805	NL 805	N 805	P 805	E 805	S 805	CF 805	CD 805	TR 805	US 805

The Russia Artisan 10/12 is the only Cyrillic wheel available - code X140



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Scan of Action

Once you've mastered the basics of DTP, you can be more adventurous – with the help of a handscanner. Alec Rae shows you how

After all these months of looking at MicroDesign 2 we must be getting used to the way it approaches a task. The Operations Menu, with its list of commands will seem like second nature now.

Which is why this is the time to have a look at another bit of Creative Technology ingenuity – the ProScan hand scanner. Because anyone who has the idea of how to use MicroDesign 2 will feel very much at home in the ProScan environment.

As soon as you load up the program you can see the similarities. And coming from the same stable as the popular DTP package, there is little possibility of compatibility problems.

If you are taking your DTP seriously, ProScan is an ideal method of getting good quality images that are perfectly suited to your needs.

SCANNING THROUGH THE AGES

Scanning and video digitising have always been a key element in desk top publishing. You can use clip art or draw your own graphics but you will never make the same impression as one good photograph.

Over the years there have been a number of attachments devised to translate pictures into files that can be read by the PCW.

In the early days the digitiser was all the rage. This allowed you to take images from a video recorder. It is probably still the ideal way to go about things if you are taking it really seriously.

If you had a video camera you could simply point it at the object that you were wanting digitised and, in minutes, you could be grabbing an image for the PCW.

However there were some disadvantages. If you didn't have a video camera you had to sit and wait until something suitable was screened on the TV and hope that you were there to record it.

Even if you had a Camcorder, most people like to have these things to take to weddings and for a day at the seaside. It seems a bit of a waste having it constantly linked up to your PCW. So each time you used it there is would be all the inconvenience of setting it up.

And, of course, when you look through a camera lens it is not the same as looking at a picture. It is more difficult to pick out the most suitable illustration from a video tape than from a choice of still pictures.

Printer or scanner?

The next stage was MasterScan, an ingenious piece of kit that turned your

But what images do you want? If you are producing a newsletter for a club, church or organisation the choice is obvious.

You get as many pictures of people into the mag as you can. People may or may not be riveted by your prose but there are few that can resist checking to see if their smiling face is 'in' this month.

And a club badge to go at the top of every letter or form makes your organisation look really professional. If you have a badge and you don't feel like reproducing it in the Design section this is a quick and effective method of getting it on file.

For a company producing sales literature the choices are just as obvious. A photograph of the latest model from your unfeasibly large range of widgets, the company logo, a picture of your smiling, friendly service staff standing by their vans outside the Sunderland depot

and/or a map showing where your Sunderland depot are all grist to the ProScan mill.

But that isn't all. If your company uses a specific typeface in a logo you can scan the words and then save them as a .CUT or .MDA file. Or if you have the full alphabet you could scan it in and then grab the letters into a font file (.MDF). Be prepared for a fair amount of repair work in the FONT section, however, as one pixel out of place can cause problems.

Also be prepared to have to do a bit of repair work, using Zoom and the other graphics tools, for any image that you scan. Sometimes, pictures that look good in their unscanned form become a bit confusing once they have been scanned. You may need a little careful adjustment to make sure they make sense when they are printed out.



Creative Technology's handscanner has revolutionised DTP on the PCW

printer into a scanner. You attached a scanning head to the print head on the PCW printer and put the picture to be scanned into the printer roller.

So while the printer thought it was printing a document it was actually reading in the information for a graphics file. This could easily be kept attached to your PCW permanently although as it did not have a through connector you could have problems if you wanted to have a number of attachments on your expansion port (see the margin note).

The disadvantage was that the illustration

had to come in a single sheet that could fit into the PCW printer – in other words not more than A4 and not too small that it would get lost in the roller. If it was in a book or on cardboard or on unsuitable paper you were stuck.

Taking it in hand

The latest trend in all computer and DTP systems is towards hand scanners that you can simply run over the surface of a page, allowing the scanner to read the image. This gives a great deal of flexibility and is certainly the quickest and easiest method available – and is the one employed by Creative Technology's ProScan package.

The major problem is that you can only scan an image the width of the handscanner – a considerably narrower gauge than either the digitiser or MasterScan. However, you can scan a picture in sections and link them up together – but this is not always easy.

Nonetheless, this can be turned into a virtue by making you look a lot more carefully at the cropping of your picture. If you have a full sized picture available, many amateurs will happily carry the whole thing. This could mean that the foreground and the sky takes up about 75 per cent of the picture and the subject is reduced to a few tiny dots in the distance.

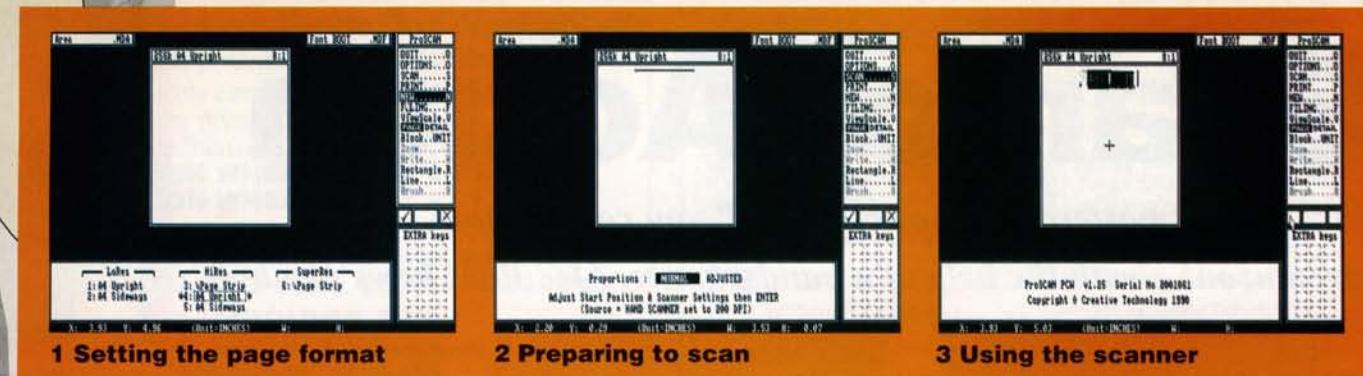
By restricting the size of the picture, it makes you think more seriously about what you really want (or need) in an illustration. Often by taking the time to choose carefully what to show, you can greatly improve the overall quality and effect of your pictures.

Portable

One problem with the PCW is that it only has the one expansion port (to the uninitiated that's the slot on the back of the PCW that you stick all the attachments to). If you want to use a RAM pack, a hard disc, a mouse and a scanner all at the same time they all have to be attached at the same point. If possible, it is therefore better to choose an interface box that has a 'through connector' – a slot just like the one that sticks out the back of the PCW. In this way you can 'piggy-back' two or three attachments at the same time. Quite often it works.

How much?

ProScan is available from Creative Technology at 10, Park Street, Uttoxeter, Staffs ST14 7AG (0889 567160). It costs £179.95, and the price includes VAT and postage. You can buy Micro Design 2 'bundled' with the handscanner for a total price of £220; by itself, Micro Design 2 costs £59.95.



1 Setting the page format

2 Preparing to scan

3 Using the scanner

First it is important to make sure your page format is right, an operation carried out by pressing [N] for New (by the way, if you have already scanned something this will clear the screen).

This brings up a menu showing a variety of page sizes and types. This is just the first of an almost bewildering choice of options available.

A4 upright and A4 sideways are pretty self explanatory. A4 upright is upright and A4 sideways is sideways. If you have an 8256 (without an expanded memory) your options are limited. Because there isn't enough room in memory to hold the program to hold the program and a full hi-res A4 page, you can only choose either of the lo-res A4 pages (with resulting loss of detail) or a quarter page of high resolution. Owners of 8512s, 9512s or 8256s with expanded memories can have a choice of full hi-res page formats or a quarter page of super resolution.

Press [S] for Scan and a line appears across the top of the screen. This shows you what width the scanned image will be and where it will come on the page. The width will depend on the H,M,L setting on the left of the scanner head.

The setting shown is L (300 dots per inch) while the H setting gives you 400 dots per inch. In practical terms, the H setting is twice the size of the L setting. So to scan a whole picture to a small scale use L. And to pick out some detail from a picture you are best to use M.

The Proportions option in the bottom window is only really important a) if you have a nine pin printer where the height-to-width ratio of the scanned image won't match the way the printer prints and b) if it is important that this ratio is right (for instance a circle where any distortion would be all too obvious). If neither of these conditions apply, you'll be quite safe using normal.

The easiest images to scan are ones with high contrast. Line drawings or text come out particularly well. This makes it ideal for grabbing images of company logos or club badges for use with newsletters or sales documentation.

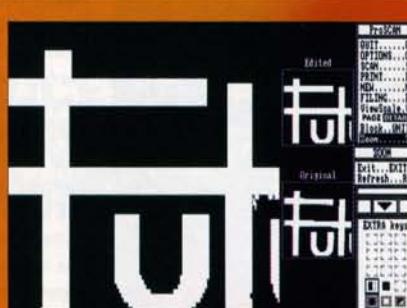
Say, for example, you wanted to produce a newsletter for the all the happy staff at Future Publishing telling them how well-paid and contented they are. Obviously you would want the rather distinctive Future Publishing logo at the top of the page.

Press [RETURN] and the screen goes black. Place a copy of the Future logo on a firm surface and line it up as squarely as possible. Press the button on top of the scanner (a red light will come on) and draw the scanner slowly and smoothly down the page. You will see the picture appear on the screen as you do it. Don't move too fast; if you do, the machine will click at you, and you'll have to try again.

0.18



4 Adjusting brightness



5 Zooming in on detail



6 Saving the image

With a black and white image the brightness setting (the rotary control on the right of the scanner) is not so critical. But once you see the image on screen you may want to adjust this. To do this just press [CAN], make the adjustment and start again.

Press any button but [CAN] and you will switch back to the normal operations section and you will suddenly discover how small the scanned image really is. It will probably look hardly more than a black blob in the full page.

Luckily you can take a closer look at any section you want by pressing [V] for 'Viewscale'. This move produces a box on screen that you can place (with a mouse or cursor keys) on the spot you want to look at. Press [RETURN] and that bit of the image is blown up to the same size as the Design Section work area in Micro Design 2. You can then make a close inspection of that part of the image.

But we can look in greater detail still. Obviously in the process of scanning things go slightly wrong. If you have scanned too fast, for instance, this can cause lines across the picture.

And this is where you discover how important it was to line things up properly in the first place. With text it is particularly important as you can very easily see if it is not perfectly horizontal.

The easiest way to tidy the logo up is to look at it using Zoom, blown up to a size where you can see the individual pixels. All the little dots and blemishes immediately become obvious. [EXTRA] and [RELAY] chooses the black box in the EXTRA menu. Then if you click on a pixel with the mouse or using the cursor keys and the Space Bar, it will turn black. [EXTRA] and the downward cursor key turns pixels white. When you are happy press [EXIT] and it will change. If you are not happy press [REFRESH] and start again.

Once you are happy with the tidied up logo you can save it for later use in your desk top publishing. Press [F] for Filing and then [F2] for SaveCUT.

This will bring up an adjustable box that you can fit round the part of the image that you want to save.

This works just the same way as in Micro Design 2. Either press the right hand button on the mouse (or [WORD] if you're using the cursor keys) to move the cursor to the top right and the bottom left corner in turn. Then set the position of these corners using the left hand button or the [LINE] key.

When it is in position press [RETURN] and choose a suitable name (in this case, FUTURE seems just right somehow). Choose the drive you want it saved on by using [ALT] and the drive letter ([ALT] and [B] for b:drive, for instance). The program will automatically add the extension .CUT to the file name.



7 Re-importing the image

Once you've captured the scanned image and saved it to disc, the file can be loaded any time in ProScan or in Micro Design 2 using the LoadCUT command.

As it can be loaded at half size, same size or double size this gives a fair amount of flexibility as to how you then go on to use the logo.

However, should you choose to use it at double size (as shown in the picture above) you may have to tidy up the edges of the rounded parts of the letters using Zoom again.

This is because the slight 'stepping' effect caused by trying to create a round edge using rectangular pixels is accentuated by the increased size.

It might even be worth your while blowing the image up to double size, so that you can work in the closest detail possible to get it just how you want it.

You could then try loading it at half size when you want to use it.



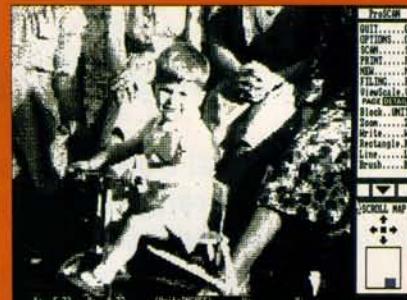
8 Selecting material

However, the real challenge of the ProScan hand scanner lies in taking images from photographs. And, of course, it is highly effective to use a good photograph in your desk top publishing.

It is preferable to choose the picture that you are going to scan with care. Try for quite a bright photograph with a fair amount of contrast. It is probably easier to see what will make a good image if the picture is black and white. But with a little practice you should be able to pick out the most likely images from colour pictures.

Just remember that the grey that blue turns into isn't all that different from the grey that green or red turn into. This is where the settings become critical.

The brightness control needs careful adjustment. Even if you can make out quite a dark looking picture on the PCW's screen it will not necessarily print out in the way that you expect. The more you experiment, the better your results will be.

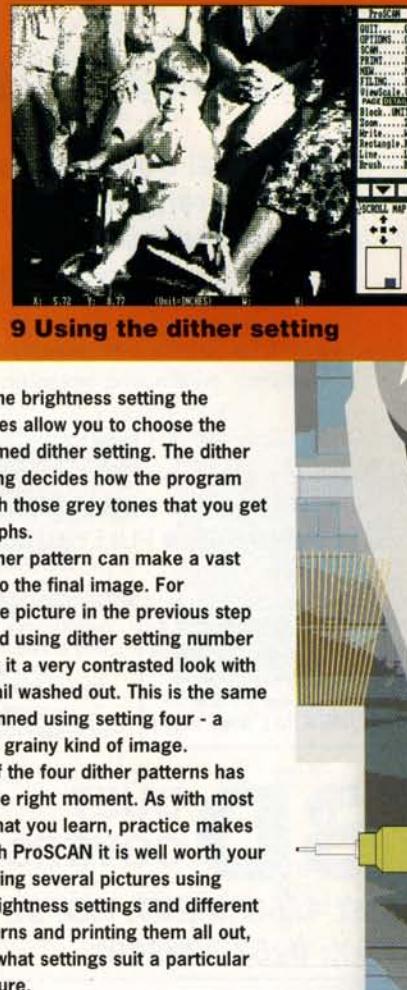


9 Using the dither setting

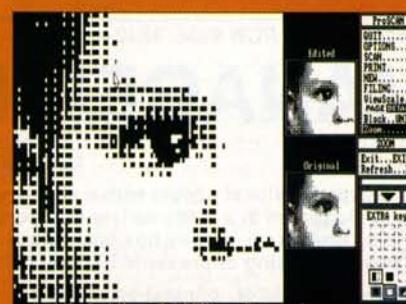
As well as the brightness setting the ProScan does allow you to choose the quaintly named dither setting. The dither switch setting decides how the program will deal with those grey tones that you get in photographs.

The dither pattern can make a vast difference to the final image. For instance, the picture in the previous step was scanned using dither setting number one - giving it a very contrasted look with a lot of detail washed out. This is the same picture scanned using setting four - a much more grainy kind of image.

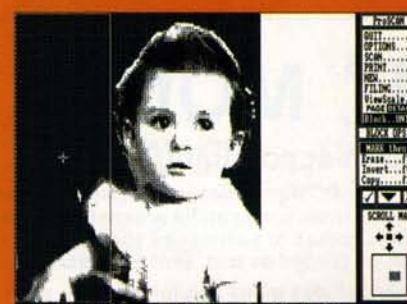
Each of the four dither patterns has its use at the right moment. As with most new skills that you learn, practice makes perfect; with ProSCAN it is well worth your while scanning several pictures using different brightness settings and different dither patterns and printing them all out, just to see what settings suit a particular type of picture.



10 Tweaking the image



11 Accentuating features



12 Cropping the picture

The great advantage about scanning a photograph in ProScan is that you don't need to accept it exactly as it is. ProScan (and Micro Design 2) have a wealth of graphics features to allow you to modify and improve your picture.

For instance, say you want to pick one face from a group of people. Scan the image, using the H setting. This time the image will fill almost the whole window.

Pick the place you want to work (using [V]iew-Scale). Then choose [B]rush - the equivalent of [P]aint in Micro Design 2. By clicking on the brush icon in the EXTRA Menu (or [EXTRA] and [RELAY]) you can toggle through the range of brushes. Click on the arrows on either side of the pattern icon ([EXTRA] and [EXCH] or [UNIT]) will allow you to find a pattern to suit your dither pattern. The arrows on either side of the Round Icon ([EXTRA] and the sideways cursor keys) adjusts the brush size. Then just blank out the background.

With all the distracting background taken out the face immediately stands out more prominently. But, if you are feeling brave, there is still a vast amount you can do to improve your picture using Zoom.

This time it is a very different process from the rather obvious changes made when working with the logo.

This is really freehand drawing and does take a fair bit of practice and at least some artistic flair.

The main aims of the process are to add contrast to the bits that have become too grey (as in the eyes here) and to add details that have been lost in the process of scanning. Here, for example, a non-existent shadow is added (see the brand new left nostril) and the line of the chin is accentuated and extended.

As this does take practice, even for a artist, be prepared to use [R]efresh to start again a few times. It is worthwhile learning how to do it.

And finally to the cropping. Cropping is the key to the effectiveness of pictures in newspapers and magazines. You must choose the shape of your picture - portrait (upright) or landscape (sideways) and then decide how much background you want.

Most of the time this will be quite obvious, although it is surprising how imaginative use of cropping can bring a quite dull picture alive.

It is possible to crop simply by using the adjustable box in SAVE.CUT to choose the right shape. It may help to remove the background (as here) using block [UNIT] and erase [F7]. By gradually trimming away at the edges of the picture you can get a real idea of how it is going to look on the page. Trim too much and you can always recover it by clicking on the cross icon or pressing [WORD]. However, it is best to save the whole window first as a .CUT file so if anything goes wrong you can simply reload and start again.

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Keeping Track

Overflowing with CDs, LPs and tapes? Rob Ainsley looks at a new program designed to help you keep track of your tracks



The Album System

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8512s only

You know how depressing it is to go into a restaurant and hear music you recognise, because it means it's over twenty years old. And how equally depressing it is to hear music you don't recognise, because it means you're over thirty years old.

But however much restaurant music you recognise, it's a fair bet that at least one room where you live has stacks of LPs, a few CDs, and piles of pirate tapes with the spines scrawled on in biro. Organising it is one of those things you somehow never get round to doing.

Now The Album System aims to do that for you, using your PCW. You enter the details of the artists, titles, tracks and medium, and the PCW will keep a list of them all in order and let you print out whatever details you need. It will remember any index numbers you want to catalogue them by too - useful for disc jockeys or serious collectors.

The Album System is vertical software: that is, it comes already set up for one purpose. Other databases - Masterfile 8000, Mini Office, AtLast, LocoFile - are quicker, more flexible and more versatile than the Album System. You could also use them to catalogue the trains you've spotted, for example. But music is all you want to catalogue, then the Album System will save you the time taken to learn the other programs: no fuss, no mess.

Room for a view

Once you've gone through your collection entering titles, tracks and artists, you can view your collection starting anywhere. Tell the PCW to start at BEAT, say, and you see the details for your albums by The Beatles, followed by the Beatles, and so on. Unfortunately you can only view the entries one at a time: all the tracks and details for the The Beatles' Rubber Soul followed by those for the White Album, and so on, just like flipping through a card index system. You can't produce summaries, though in the 'Catalogue Collection' option you can get printouts of various lists such as all albums with tracks that have 'New York' in the title. So, if you can't remember who recorded that track 'New York, New York', this option will find it

for you and tell you the artist, album title and index number, and will tell you whether it's on CD, tape or LP.

The Album System is a bit slow and cumbersome - it is written in BASIC so the search functions take time, and can take up to 30 seconds to hop between menu items sometimes - but it has been thoughtfully designed with clear menus and data entry schemes, and seems reasonably foolproof. For example, when printing out, you can stop the printing any time by pressing [STOP]; sounds obvious, but you'd be surprised how many programs would force you to

* VIEW COLLECTION SCREEN *

BEATLES	
1967-1970	
APPLE(1)	(P)1970
On Record	Entered: 26/02/86

Artist sequence selected.
 Format = all
 Start point = BEAT
 (27)

THU 18/04/91
 01/23541

STRAWBERRY FIELDS FOREVER
PENNY LANE
SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND
WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS
DAY IN THE LIFE
LET IT BE
HARD DAY'S NIGHT
LOVE
I AM THE WORLDS
HELLO GOODBYE
THE FOOL ON THE HILL
MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR
LADY MARMONA
HEY JUDE
REVOLUTION

Up/down arrows to step thru collection.
 Press [P] key to print these details.
 [STOP] to return to selection screen.
 [ENTER]

THE ALBUM SYSTEM					Page 1
Albums including 'HEART' in their track list:					
ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL/CAT NO.	PUB. FORMAT	LOC'N.	ENTERED
1. ABC	THE LEIXON OF LOVE	NEUTRON	1982 Record	(103)	26/08/86
2. ABC	----> ALL OF MY HEART	PIONEER NT 290	1982 Cassette	(372)	09/02/91
3. B.A. ROBERTSON	INITIAL SUCCESS	PYRAMID	4555 Cassette	(239)	09/02/91
4. BEACH BOYS	----> EAT YOUR HEART OUT SANDY NELSON	CBS	1980 Record	(59)	26/08/86
5. BEATLES	KEEPIN' THE SUMMER ALIVE	PARLOPHONE	1963 Record	(10)	26/08/86
6. BEATLES	WITH THE BEATLES	APPLE(1)	1970 Record	(27)	26/08/86
	----> 1967-1970				
	----> SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND				

churn through to the end! All the above could be said about LocoScript, which hasn't exactly been a failure, so maybe the designers have done it right.

Variety performance

But it would be nice to see one or two more options added: the ability to summarise the collection on screen one album to a line in screenfuls of 30, showing just artist-album title; the ability to select print styles (you have no option but to print out in condensed pitch AND UPPER CASE, WHICH CAN BE IRRITATING); or the chance to export files to LocoScript for inclusion in documents there.

At the moment the program only works on PCW8512s though versions for other machines are on the way. The

Top: The Album System lists your record collection details to the screen one at a time
Bottom: Now, where on earth was that album by that Scots chap with that track about eating your heart out? Aha! The Album System's search facility finds the answer

installation procedure needs rethinking: to get to the stage of creating your own record database requires you, according to the manual, to format one 178K disc and two 706K discs - a very time-consuming and disc-inefficient process.

Having said that, the documentation is extremely clear and very comprehensive. There is no way that you could fail to understand how to operate the program, and even the elementary business of disc copying is explained in a far more lucid way than most manuals dedicated to the subject.

You can't expect too much of a program that costs just over £15. Indeed, there is so much trash around that doesn't work for that price, or stuff that does work which costs £50 and over, that a solid performer like this is perfectly good value for money. It does exactly what it sets out to do, and it does it well.

If you buy The Album System you won't tidy up your piles of tapes, CDs and cassettes overnight, but at least you shouldn't lose track any more.

THE ALBUM SYSTEM					
Pluses		listing options			
▲ Cheap		▲ Slow and			
▲ Foolproof		cumbersome			
▲ Easy to use		sometimes			
▲ Clear menus		Ease of use	5/5		
▲ Does what it sets out to do		Performance	3/5		
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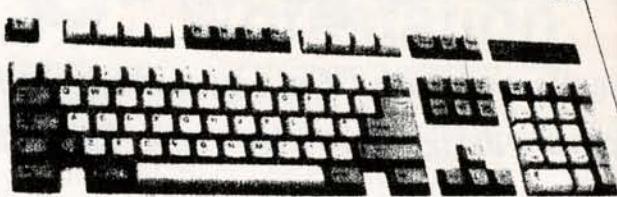
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Driving Force

An hour of your time, a few basic tools and a modest financial outlay can give your 9512 more flexibility than ever before. This month's guide to drive installation reveals all!

Silicon City's new, internal 3.5" drive for the PCW looks set to take the industry by storm. And this is no mean feat in a field where everything – or so we thought – has been done before.

Let's take a look at the facts. The PCW can have a new 3" drive fitted internally. The larger drives however (the 3.5" or 5.25") will not fit into the slot provided. They have to be fitted externally. These, so far, have been the only options available to the user.

Until now, Silicon City have produced a drive that flouts the most basic laws of common sense – a PCW drive that is both 3.5" and internal. The question is of course, how does a 3.5" drive go into a 3" space?

Open the box and all is revealed. Out comes the disc drive and the instructions. Nothing unusual here. The screws and the blank disc are all par for the course. But then there is the hacksaw and the file. And this is the answer. Sure enough, the extra half inch of space is created by simply filing away a portion of the PCW's outer casing.

This may sound rather brutal, but in fact, it is far from difficult to do. In fact, the filing part of the exercise takes mere minutes to perform. And as for the rest? Well, you do have to remove the back of your PCW, but this is by no means as daunting as most people seem to think.

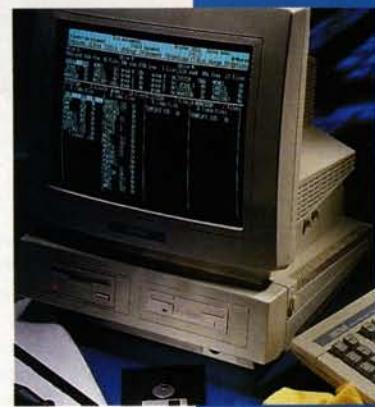
The process of installing an internal drive is merely a case of opening the PCW, exposing the drive location, and screwing the new drive into place. Then you attach the lines of communication, put it all back together and that's that.

The main advantage of having a 3.5" drive is, of course, compatibility with the PCW's bigger brother, the PC. The PC uses 3.5" discs and, because it is such a common sight in offices, the option of interchanging files between the workplace and the home is a real bonus to the PCW user.

Silicon City provide the majority of the tools required to install the drive as part of the whole package (see our 'Before' box). Considering the price of some of the external 3.5" drives on the market, Silicon City's charge of £91.90 is very reasonable. The added

convenience of having an internal drive even makes it worth paying a little over the odds. It takes up no extra space on your desk, it doesn't have a separate power switch and it is always there at the ready. So, if the price is palatable, and the benefits appealing, why is there a niggling doubt at the back of our minds when we consider fitting an internal drive? It is more than likely to be the idea of carving up your PCW – something which probably fills many a proud owner with horror. And looking at the tools with which the installation is carried out, the operation seems even more daunting. Rest assured; if you are of the opinion that hacksaws and files smack of amateurism, then prepare to be persuaded otherwise. Fitting the drive was easy to carry out – and the end result looked extremely professional.

You can achieve an equally professional look in the comfort of your own home. So, let's get started! ▶



Fact File

- Silicon City's 3.5" internal drive for the PCW9512 costs £91.90 including VAT. The company can be contacted at Postal Buildings, Ash Street, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 3EB, telephone (09662) 88707

- The same process is possible for the PCW 8256 - and we'll be walking you through the installation in next month's 8000 Plus

- A pack of ten 3.5" discs from Dixons cost £19.95. In comparison, a pack of only five 3" discs costs £14.95. If you get through a lot of discs, fitting a 3.5" drive will certainly save you money in the long run.

- Transferring files from your PCW to a PC (or vice versa) can be made an easier task by a utility called PCW-2 in 1. The program costs £29.95 and is available from Moonstone Computing at Unit 14, Strathclyde Business Centre, Clyde Street, Clydebank, G81 1PF (041) 941 3120



The PCW9512; but how will the drive fit into the space available?

BEFORE

The pack that you receive should contain all of the following: a drive, instructions, two discs (one blank and one called Shareware Elite), a hacksaw blade, four identical screws, one small screw with washer, a template (a small black and white piece of paper) and a piece of sticky-backed plastic to surround the drive. There will also be the file components. You may need to assemble

BEFORE YOU START...

the file. To do this, put the small black plastic bung inside the file handle and then insert the blade of the file.

You will need to provide one or two things in addition; a large piece of cloth, a crosshead screwdriver, a flat-bladed screwdriver, a small piece of clean cloth, a piece of paper, a pen, sellotape, and if possible, a Stanley knife.

AFTER

The new drive can be used in the usual way. It will be recognised on your LocoScript Disc Management Screen when you load your start of day disc, and you can save or load any file to the new B: drive without trauma. Discs for the 3.5" drive are formatted in the usual way, using either Diskit in CP/M or the equivalent LocoScript option.

So what are the advantages of this new drive? There are two major bonuses. One is that the 3.5" disc itself is more widely available than its 3" cousin, thus the cost of the discs is reduced. But what is really going to attract users is that these discs can be used on a PC. Any file saved on the B drive can be

transferred on to a PC with the help of the Shareware Elite disc supplied in the pack. Conversely, files created on the PC can also be read by the PCW. To ensure that documents are legible between machines, you need to use the supplied Shareware Elite. Admittedly this is not the most helpful program we've ever encountered - but there are alternatives that are more geared towards the beginner. Moonstone's PCW-2 in 1 is a fairly good example (see fact file).



The brand new drive, fitted neatly into place

Hints & Tips

• Step 1:

The plug is left in the socket so that the electricity can run away through the earth connection. This is the quickest method of ridding your PCW of any residual electricity.

• Step 2:

If you have a metal logo rather than a paper one, it is slightly more difficult to remove. Prise away one corner, using the tip of a screwdriver. Then pull very hard and eventually the logo should come away from the plastic.

• Step 4:

So that you do not lose any screws, sellotape them to your piece of paper and label them according to the order in which they were removed. This saves much frustration later on.

• Step 5:

Static electricity can damage your PCW. Before you delve inside your machine you should earth yourself. This can be done by touching a metal radiator or pipe. If neither are around, then plug in an earthed electrical appliance (such as a hair dryer or an iron) and touch that.

• Step 6:

If you are sure that there are extra wires to undo, then go ahead. But, make sure you disconnect them carefully and take note of where the connections are, so that you can replace them later.



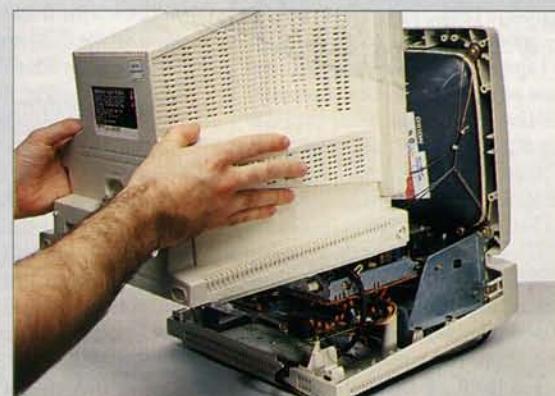
1 The whole process of adding a drive should take about one hour. Before you start, check that you have everything you need for the operation and lay it out within easy reach. You should check that your work surface fields sufficient space to lay the PCW's monitor face-down in front of the base. To ensure that there is no residual electricity in your PCW, switch it off and wait for a minute (see our margin note). Then unplug it from the mains and remove the printer and any other add-ons. It is best to put these safely out of the way.



2 The area where the new drive is to be fitted is covered with the PCW logo. This will either be a metal plate, or a piece of paper. Remove it. The slot is now semi-exposed. It is covered with a plastic plate, which is held in place by small tabs. To uncover this area, you should carefully cut through the plastic tabs using the tip of the hacksaw, as shown in the photograph. Take care not to insert the blade too far into the machine. There will not be too much dust at this stage, but try to prevent any debris from going inside.



3 Take the small template supplied in the pack, and place it over the section of the front casing which you have just exposed. The top of the black rectangle should be positioned in line with the top of the slot. The black part of the template should now be filed away. The file is used to completely whittle away the plastic. For the best results, hold the file with the smooth edge uppermost when removing the top part of the plastic, and then turn it to face downwards for the bottom half. This ensures that the edges of the hole will not be ragged.

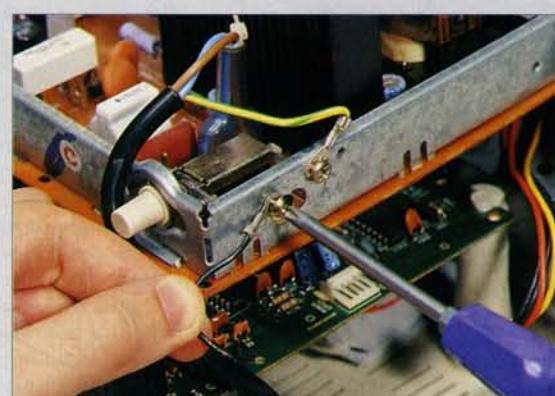


4 The next step is to take the back off the PCW. To do this, you need to remove six screws. The casing of the 9512 is marked with arrows to show you where the screws are located. Two are covered by a removable plastic cap. Pull away the brightness and contrast knobs. Now, take off the PCW cover by sliding it back about an inch and lifting it away from the main body. This will reveal the insides of your PCW, containing two large circuit boards - one above the other. We now need to separate the PCW into two parts to fit the drive.



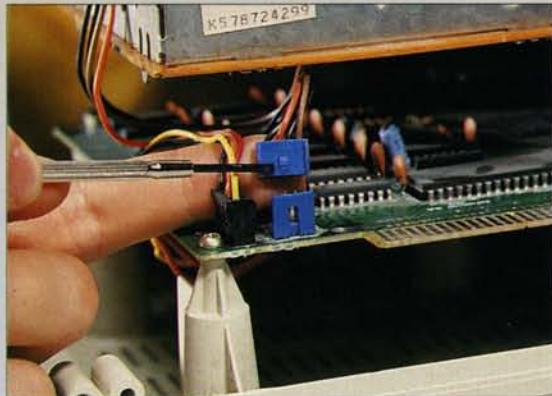
5 There are three cables that run between the upper and lower circuit boards. These need to be detached before the split can take place.

Look along the right hand side of the lower circuit board and you should see a 5-wire connector marked CPO05, (it is about half way along) Grip the plastic firmly, as shown above, and pull it towards you. The connector should come out of the socket fairly easily. Don't be tempted to pull the wires themselves: they could easily come loose.

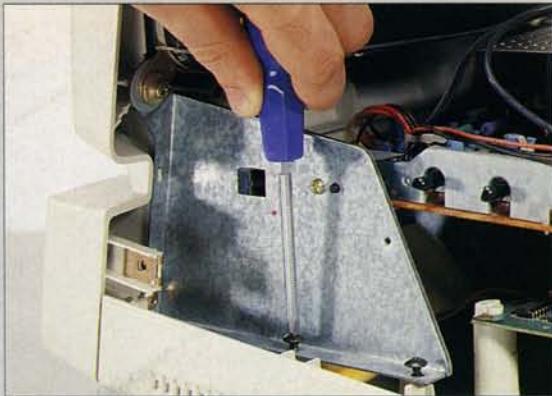


6 The next disconnection to be made is that of an earth wire. The metal frame surrounding the top circuit board reveals two earth wires on the right hand side. One is green and yellow, the other is black. You will only need to unscrew the black wire, as shown in our photograph.

If you have a continental model of the 9512 there may be some other wires to disconnect. You will soon notice this when you try and separate the two halves, and it will be apparent which ones need to be dealt with.

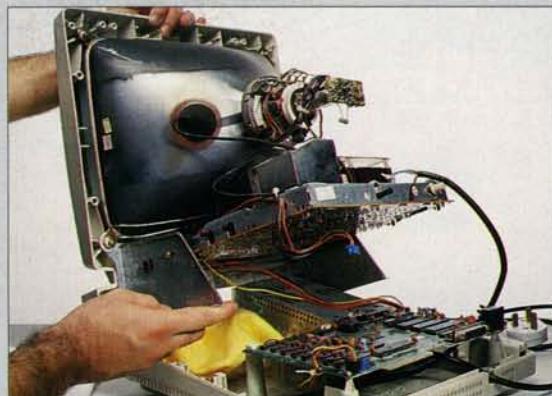


7 The last cable to be disconnected is slightly more complicated. First locate it by looking for a connector marked EXPANSION BUS J003 on the lower circuit board. Next to this are two more 4-way connectors. The one marked CPO06 (nearest to J003) is the one you want. There is a small rectangular catch within the cut out square inside the connector. You need to release it by pulling the top of the catch towards you with the fingernail of one hand. With the other hand pull off the connector as shown in the photograph.



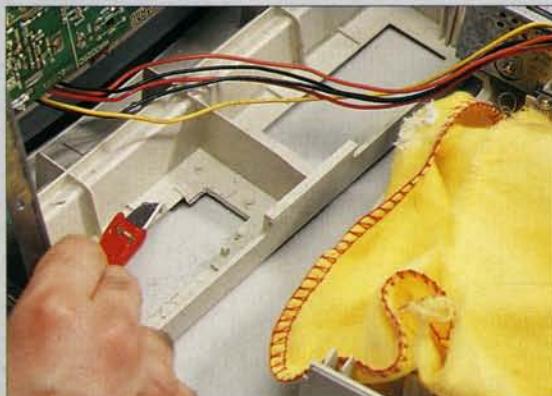
8 You need to create some leeway in the mains cable. Lift out the piece of plastic moulding that holds it in place. Then feed through about three feet of cable.

You are now almost ready to completely separate the two halves of the PCW. They are held together by two metal brackets screwed into the base and the front panel. The screws on the base panel need to be slackened as shown in the picture. They should be loose enough to allow them to be removed quickly and easily.

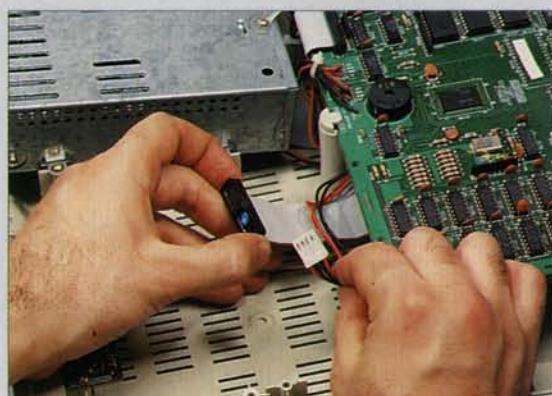


9 Place a cloth on the workbench in front of the screen. Hold the front panel with one hand and, with the other hand, remove the bracket screws that are already loose.

Tilt the panel forwards about 30 degrees. Place one hand on the top of the front panel and one underneath. The whole of the front assembly - consisting of the screen, the front panel and the top circuit board - can then be lifted away from the base. This half of the PCW is placed with the screen facing downwards on the cloth that you have laid out ready.

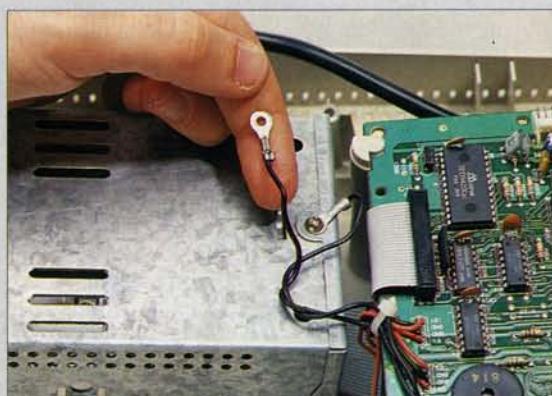


10 At this stage it is sensible to check that the new drive will actually fit into the slot which you have created by simply testing it for size, without taking off the plastic cover. The plastic tabs that were cut with the hacksaw can be tidied up using the Stanley knife. To complete the preparations, you need to clean away the dust created by the filing. This can be done with a vacuum or by gently sweeping the dust away. Make sure that no debris gets into the A drive. Finally, discard the protective piece of cloth.



11 The new drive will need to be connected to two cables and an earth lead. The two cables - a ribbon cable and a 4-wire power cable - are safely tucked away underneath the A drive as shown in our photograph. If not, they can be found under the circuit board behind the A drive.

They are held in position by a nylon strap. You will need to cut through this to release them. They can then be pulled over to the B drive position, as shown in the photograph. The new drive can now, at long last, be unpacked.



12 You now need to find the earth lead for the A drive. There are two available earth leads: one for each drive. The top of the A drive has a screw with two black earth wires attached to it. You can disconnect one of these to use with your B drive. Sometimes, as in our photograph, there will only be one earth lead underneath this catch. The other one will always be nearby and probably bound to another cable. Wherever it is situated it will look like the one in our picture and is easy to identify.

Hints & Tips

● Step 7:

The catch is actually a small flap at the front of the connection. A small protrusion of plastic on the connector slots into a hole on the flap. It does require rather strong fingernails to pull back this catch. If your nails aren't suitable, it might be better to use a very small screwdriver instead.

● Step 8:

Take care not to loosen the screws attached to the front panel by mistake.

● Step 9:

The white cloth is there purely to protect the screen from scratches. You can use any soft piece of material, such as a towel or a blanket.

● Step 10:

The drive will actually be slightly too small for the slot. Don't worry about this. The gap is sealed later using the plastic frame provided in the kit.

● Step 11:

To make it easier to identify the two cables you can compare them to those attached to your A drive. They should look exactly the same: the ribbon cable is the flat, wide one and the power cable is four multi-coloured wires.

● Step 12:

The nylon strap can be stubborn to remove. If your Stanley knife doesn't do the trick, try a small sharp pair of scissors.

Hints & Tips

• Step 12:

The earth lead is not always black in colour. If in doubt, check your earth lead against the one attached to the A drive. They should be the same colour and both have a metal loop at the end of the wire.

• Step 14:

If you needed to disconnect your A drive's earth lead in step 13, you must remember to screw it tightly back into place later on.

• Step 16:

Although there are standard ways of assembling a computer, these are not always strictly adhered to.

Aberrations, such as the reversal of a ribbon cable, are a typical example of these small discrepancies

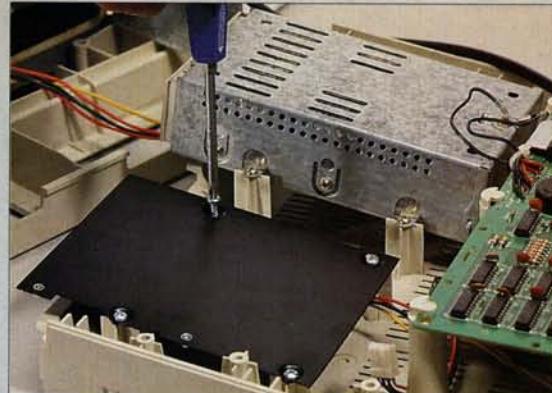
• Step 17:

As you lift the front into position the 'hook' must be well and truly engaged.

This may take more than one attempt so be patient.

• Step 18:

If your cover does not slot into place easily, check that you have replaced the mains cable properly. The plastic moulding should be fitted back into its original position, in the slot at the back of the casing.

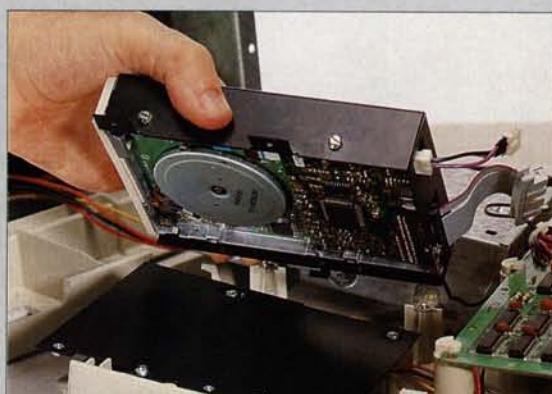


13 A close inspection of your new drive will reveal two screws holding the drive on to a base plate. Undo these, label them, and place them in your screw collection. Slide the plate forwards and lift the drive away from the plate. The plate is now separate from the rest of the drive and can be attached to the PCW base. There are four screws provided for this purpose. Make sure that it is the correct way round by checking it against the drive itself. It is placed on to the four plastic pillars and screwed into place as shown above.



14 The second earth lead now needs to be attached to the new drive. Hold the disc drive close enough to make the connection.

Place the loop at the end of the earth wire over the small screw supplied with the kit. Then slip over the washer (which is also supplied). The screw can then be put into place. There is a small hole at the back of the drive for this purpose. Tighten the screw securely so that there is good contact between all the surfaces.

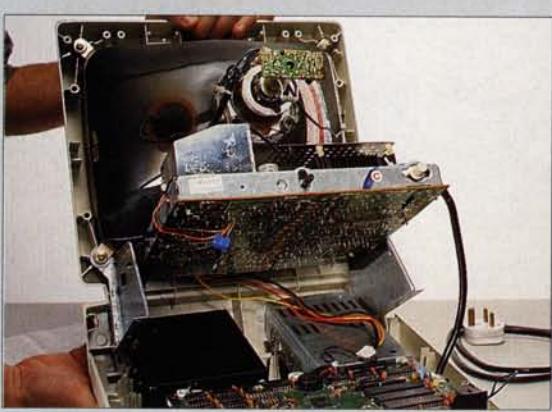


15 Now place the drive on to the plate about half an inch back from its final position. Then slide it forwards until the catch at the side engages. It will not be able to go any further forward. Fix it permanently into position by replacing the two screws you took out in step 13. At this stage, the advantages of having a labelled collection of screws becomes apparent. The two connectors - the four-wire power cable and the ribbon cable - should be at the rear of the drive ready to connect.



16 The ribbon cable must be fitted with the coloured edge of the cable in line with the coloured edge of the connector from the B drive. This can be seen in the photograph. There is, however, one exception to this rule. If you examine your A drive, the coloured strip will normally be closest to the power cable. If it is the other way round, then the ribbon cable should also be the "wrong" way round.

Then the power cable is connected as shown. They are then both tucked away neatly underneath the drive.

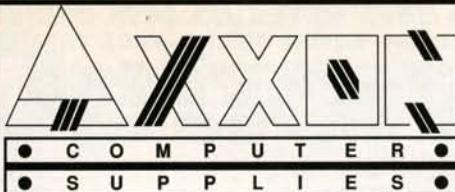


17 To replace the front panel you may need someone to help hold the PCW in place. Or you can lean it against a wall to stop the base from sliding backwards.

Position the front panel in front of the base and feed the mains cable back through the hole. To put back the front part, you need to engage the hook on the front panel with the lip of the base. This is best done at an angle of 45 degrees as shown. Then pivot the front panel upwards. When it is upright and the drives are in place, replace the two bracket screws.



18 Finally you can replace the cover. The best way to do this is first move it downwards into position, two inches behind the front panel. You need to squeeze in the front of the casing slightly, in order to get the two rails into position. Next, slide it the whole thing forwards into place and replace the six screws and the brightness and contrast buttons. The final stage, as shown above, is to fix the plastic surround to the mouth of the drive. All that remains now is to switch the machine on and check that the drive is recognised!



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Optional Extras

Adorning your PCW with 'extras' can be an addictive pastime – as veteran upgrader David Frost discovered

I used to have a PCW8256, but now I'm not so sure. It still looks the same as the machine over whose purchase we agonised nearly five years ago but underneath much has changed and the performance is now comparable with a PC. Remember those days? £499 plus VAT seemed, and indeed was, good value. The alternatives were pretty limited. You could buy an IBM or something like it, but these were the days before Alan Sugar had started to take the market by storm, so a fat four figure sum was being asked.

The choice seemed obvious, but the memsahib had to be convinced. "You could use it for keeping the recipes on", I ventured, with visions of a keyboard full of flour and fervently hoping such a generous offer would be turned down. It was and I was able to get on with undisturbed LocoScripting. Well almost. It took about 6 weeks of interpreting the niceties of the LocoScript 1 manual before the air in the dining room returned to its normal colour and the children could be permitted within earshot.

LocoScripting was all very well but despite the pitch of the advertising the machine was obviously capable of much more than neatly printed articles and letters. A spreadsheet soon became a necessity and as I was already familiar with Supercalc 3 its PCW equivalent seemed the ideal solution. An early version of Stockmarket soon followed to keep track of the millions and in its latest version is still in use (although I have tried and like Sharemaster and Investor).

The up and up

No real PCW aficionado can be happy for long with LocoScript 1 so I soon found an excuse for upgrading to LocoScript 2 together with Mail/Spell/File add-ons. The inadequacies of 256k RAM immediately became apparent. The small dictionary was far too small and the big one wouldn't fit (and is also too small). With the machine over a year old I felt bold enough to embark on a DIY upgrade. Even to a clumsy fingered individual like me it seemed easy and was the first revolution in my use of the PCW. Proper spell checking became feasible and the drudgery of making backups was much reduced. Extra RAM wins my vote as the best value for money addition to the basic machine.

Successful publication of a booklet provided a source of funds at the same time as the Cirtech Diamond hard disc

came on the market. If you've never had a hard disc you don't know what you are missing, but I had and I did. When it arrived I mumbled something about "Didn't cost much and it's tax deductible" to the chief cashier and dashed off to tuck it away out of sight in the nether regions of my workstation.

Connecting up was child's play to one who had mastered the intricacies of fitting fiddly chips and the instructions on how to run the installation software were easy to follow. I switched on in eager anticipation. Nothing happened. Whether they had changed the software after writing the manual or done it the other way round I never discovered but either way manual and software did not match. It took a week before I was able to enjoy the added speed and flexibility conferred by my purchase.

Speeding along

A year went by before I spotted another gadget worthy of being added to my machine. This was Cirtech's Sprinter, which was trailed at about the same time as we were being reminded how many shopping days remained to Christmas and arrived just as I was realising that once again I had avoided giving anything up for Lent. The delay, I was informed, was due to extensive testing to ensure the device was compatible with just about every piece of hardware you can buy for the PCW. With such thorough preparation, I decided, there would be none of the problems I had experienced with Diamond.

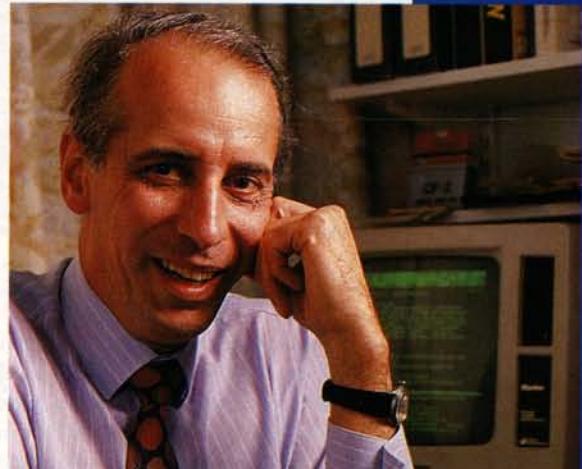
I opted for the internal version partly because there seems to be a practical limit to how much you can sensibly stick on the expansion port, but also because of the challenge involved. This was not just a matter of taking out one chip and putting in another – soldering would be needed too. It is not difficult if you have a soldering iron with a 3mm bit or smaller. I had to buy a suitable bit for £1.50 which was a saving on the £5.75 it would cost to send the PCW to Cirtech. On the other hand, soldering irons cost from £6 so if you haven't got one a factory fitting job is cheaper. Before deciding whether to do a DIY job have a look at the existing Z80 processor. Fitting is easier if it is in a plastic socket than if it is soldered to the board; the latter case necessitating cutting one of the pins with a suitable tool.

If you haven't yet fitted expansion RAM do so before fitting Sprinter, which blocks access to the slots for the

expansion chips. You can buy expansion RAM with Sprinter but it costs more than RAM chips on their own. If with 512k you still run out of space in the M drive this is the time to add some more. I now have 768k. Fitting turned out to be easy with only two joints to solder (although some models need four). A quick test boot from the floppy drive to check for correct installation and we were in business.

It was several days before I noticed the extra RAM was conspicuously absent when booting from the hard disc. "I've lost all the extra RAM," I said to the Management who by this time seemed quite reconciled to expensive additions

"It took about six weeks of learning the niceties of the LocoScript 1 manual before the air in the dining room returned to its normal colour, and the children could be permitted within earshot."



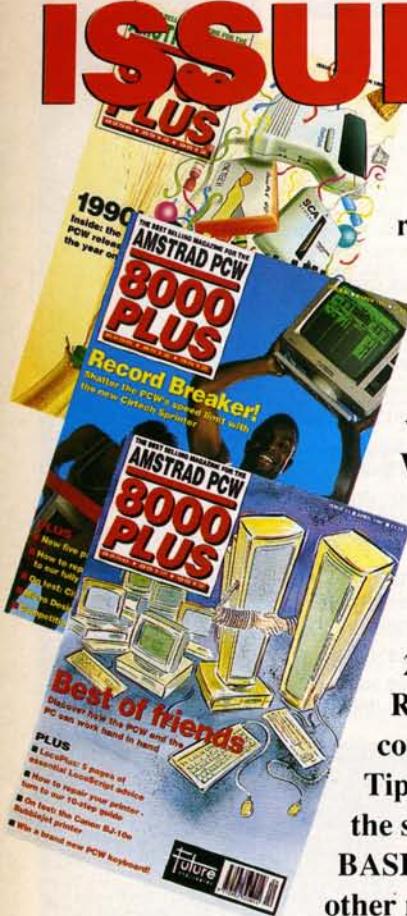
David Frost, the man who chose and fitted the internal version of Cirtech's Sprinter – "because of the challenge involved".

to the computer. "Have you looked inside the box it came in?", she asked, ever practical. A phone call revealed that my Diamond was an early model and needed a modification to the interface to make it work with the extra RAM. So much for thorough testing.

So, the question now is, am I better off with a PCW768 and 32Mb hard disc or should I have bought a PC? The hard disc is transferable to a PC should I wish but Sprinter and the RAM (at about £150) are not transferable. All the software has a PC equivalent and most of the files can be transferred if the need arises. So, I used to have a PCW8256, but now I've got a machine which provides a PC like performance for a net cost which is less than that of the PCW's ubiquitous bigger brother. And that, as they say, is a bargain.

"If you've never had a hard disc you don't know what you are missing, but I had and I did. When it arrived, I mumbled something about "Didn't cost much and it's tax deductible" to the chief cashier, and dashed off to tuck it away out of sight."

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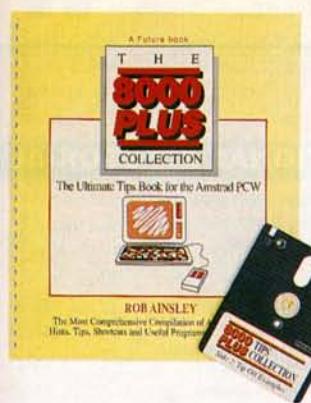
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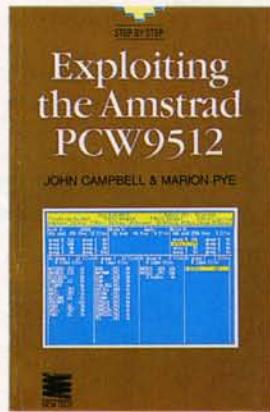
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Write about what you know" is the advice given to aspiring authors in a million "How To Do It" handbooks. Like almost every terse, unambiguous recommendation ever made, it needs several qualifications, and there are always exceptions....

Writing about writing is the most seductive trap of all. You are a writer. Day after day you sit there on your bottom, growing ever more pallid and flabby, bathed in the eldritch green light of the PCW screen. Inspiration is needed. A little voice says, "Write about what you know." You start tapping out a story about a writer sitting in front of a word processor strangely like yours.

Gosh, this is easy! Drawing on memories of times when you're *sure* that what appeared on the screen wasn't what you typed, you develop a plot about a word processor that *comes alive* and rewrites the author's words, takes over what passes for his or her mind, hacks into the US defence network, starts a nuclear war, becomes God or Satan or even, dare I suggest, the editor of 8000 Plus (Watch it! -Ed).

Or instead you relax by playing some computer game, and that suggests a story about a game that becomes real, or traps the player inside the program, or....

The trouble is that, leaving out the later and more apocalyptic developments, all these storylines are based on what you know *too* well: sitting at a computer keyboard.

The same old story

Astonishingly, hordes of other writers have already found themselves in the same position and rung endless changes on the above plots. Editors moan and gnash their teeth at the sight of yet another minimally different variation.

(Of course there are non-fiction equivalents, such as the incredibly droll article about hilarious alternatives suggested by LocoSpell....)

This aspect of writing about what you know actually predates word processors. The annals of SF are full of strange typewriters: in 1955, for example, Damon Knight published a story about a writer whose typing errors proved to be coded messages from world-dominating supercomputers.

The infamous L.Ron Hubbard anticipated the "trapped inside a computer game that has become horribly real" in 1940, with a story about being trapped in the plot of a hack novel.

Which reminds me of another pitfall pointed out by the critic Nick Lowe in a cruelly funny article. Writers often drink a lot of coffee while tapping out their masterworks. Coffee is much on their minds. Fat, lazily written books thus tend to contain all too many scenes in which, without advancing the plot in any way, the characters stop for a nice cup of coffee. When you start to notice and count these instances of authors "writing about what they know", it can become downright embarrassing.

There again, suppose you know something that's not commonplace but fairly esoteric. Can it be used in a story?

Well, if it's such information as how to create highly specialist PCW programs or how to detect the sex of frogspawn, it might be wiser to write it up (if at all) as a straight article for a computer magazine or *New Scientist*, respectively.

Tried and tested

The thing to beware of in fiction is the Great Expository Dollop required before lay readers can understand the interesting revelation you plan to spring on them. In bad SF this is traditionally introduced by having someone say, "Gee, Professor, I know you told me already but how does the frogspawn-sexing widget work exactly?" The Professor then says, "Well, son, it's like this," and talks without interruption for three pages.

Alternatively, the Professor is dispensed with altogether and you get a multi-page chunk of imaginary history starting "Twenty years ago, the ships of the Federation had..." and ending with the pungent words, "...and so the free universe was saved and frogspawn-sexing became an exact science."

No, this story will only move properly if the weird science is woven into its fabric, revealed bit by bit in calculated, teasing asides. And it should be important to someone in the tale. A major character's happiness, or job, or life, must depend on getting that frogspawn properly sexed.

Another dangerous kind of specialist knowledge is the Thing That Really Happened To You. If you're writing straight journalism, the facts are supposed to come first (I know they don't always). In fiction, though, that's not the point.

In writing fiction, you are constructing a narrative machine designed to give the reader particular sensations of excitement, wonder, terror or whatever. If one of the components doesn't fit, it's no good wailing — as inexperienced writers so often do — "But that's the way it *happened*, I was *there*." Real-life incidents generally need to be distanced, fictionalised and filed down to shape before they can work as a cog in the narrative. Authenticity, alas, is no guarantee of artistic value.

Too much!

My last category of dubious knowledge is a more debatable one ... but I think it can be dangerous to be too exclusively well-read in the kind of genre fiction you plan to write.

Take science fiction (as I usually do). Obviously no one has much real specialist knowledge of such familiar SF gadgets as matter transmitters, faster-than-light spacecraft and time machines. But in a nebulous way there is a kind of SF consensus about these and many other strange devices. If you've read all the SF ever written, not only will your brains have turned to soup but you'll find yourself heavily influenced by what past writers have done.

Sometimes, agreed, this can help you avoid hackneyed plot devices. You will know that you just cannot use that one about the man who thinks that he's trapped in a memory warp on a strange



Last Writes

Finding a new way to treat old topics can be difficult for writers – as Dave Langford explains

planet with green creatures chanting at him in a less than friendly way. Everyone knows that it's only a matter of time before he wakes up. SF which builds only on other SF will almost automatically emerge as stale, with small twists on established ideas rather than anything brand-new. If you are a towering genius, maybe you can do it. But far easier than being a towering genius is to read a lot *outside* SF, both fiction and non-fiction, in the hope that some strange hybrid notions will emerge from the cross-fertilization.

But writing reaches a deadlock situation, a point where the fight between producing something new and imaginative or regurgitating a distinctly old chestnut has to be resolved one way or another. Ultimately, as you sit there staring into the terrible void of that blank computer screen, (when you can memorise the LocoScript disc management screen, you know you're in trouble) you have to coax something new out of the unknown territories of your own imagination.

It's usually at this point that the advice in the handbooks needs to be rephrased: "Write about what you don't know." Or don't know yet ... until you've written it.

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Home Truths

Working from home doesn't have to involve isolation from the outside world - especially if you own a PCW. Andrew Bibby investigates

It's easy to imagine - particularly perhaps when you're stuck on a train or in a motorway snarl-up on your way into work - the pleasures to be gained from giving up urban life and moving to a little village deep in the countryside. The problem, of course, is what you would do next. Unfortunately, perhaps, work and career opportunities tend to be firmly city-based - exactly the reason why much of the British population left the countryside for the cities a century or more ago.

Could new technology be about to change that relationship? Do new computer and telecoms developments make it possible to live far away from work colleagues and clients? Is the age of communicating by computer and telephone line from a high-tech workstation in a spare room nearer than we think? (Will Sutherland soon be as convenient as Surrey, or Penzance replace Penge as a base for office workers in the City?)

Some people think so. The evocative term 'electronic cottage' was coined by Alvin Toffler in his influential book *The Third Wave*, first published over a decade ago. "It takes an act of courage," he wrote, "to suggest that our biggest factories and office towers may, within our lifetimes, stand half-empty, reduced to use as ghostly warehouses or converted into living space. Yet this is precisely what the new mode of production makes possible: a return to cottage industry on a new, higher, electronic basis, and with it a new emphasis on the home as the centre of society."

The rural life

The idea that 'telecommuting' or 'teleworking' could soon replace traditional commuting, has attracted considerable media and academic attention in the years since Toffler wrote (even though as yet there are few

examples of telework operating in practice). The English rural development group ACRE, for example, recently appointed a worker to research telework opportunities in the countryside. The Highlands and Islands Development Board have also been active, striking a deal with BT in order to make sure that tiny telephone exchanges in the north of Scotland are equipped with the latest digital telecoms technology. ("This is the most important single investment the HIDB has made in the economic future of the Highlands and Islands," they went on to suggest.)

BT itself has been pushing the idea of teleworking: a recent national advertisement promoting their services showed a photograph of a period country cottage, complete with the caption "Office, Sweet Office". All you need to set up in business from home, claimed BT, was "a phone socket, a desk that overlooks the garden and the right equipment." Is it really that simple?

Kitted out

The right equipment for teleworking, as readers of 8000 Plus will be aware, need not cost very much, and a PCW is perfectly adequate way to start. To get your PCW on-line (that is, communicating with other computers elsewhere, via the ordinary telephone line) you will also need a modem. A modem's task is to convert the digitalised information produced by the computer into an analogue (wave) signal, suitable for sending down the phone line (modems will eventually become redundant when our traditional telephone network is replaced by the long-promised Integrated Services Digital Network, ISDN). You will also need an RS232 interface to plug in the modem, and suitable comms software - a total expenditure of perhaps £100-£200.

Once you are on-line, the outside world awaits you. It is an easy matter to



"All you need for your electronic cottage is a PCW, a telephone, and a source of electricity"

link your PCW up with a mainframe located the other side of the world (if you use on-line database services, California may be a frequent choice, for reasons we shall see shortly).

You can send LocoScripted documents, converted into ASCII files, direct from the PCW to one of the millions of telex or fax machines worldwide, by using an electronic mail service. Or you could forward memos, messages, or drafts of reports to other business colleagues and customers entirely electronically. All they have to do is to amend them and return them straight into your PCW.

The development of computer communications, in other words, has made teleworking a real possibility. Simple though it may sound, all you really need for your fairytale electronic cottage in the country is a PCW, a telephone line and a source of electricity.

But if you are planning to make serious business use of this tele-technology you will need to be aware of the full range of on-line services available to you. And that is what we'll look at now.

The write way

Andrew Bibby is something of a communications expert. He is the author of a practical handbook for teleworkers, to be published by Hodder paperbacks later this year. He also wrote the feature on British Telecom's Electronic Yellow Pages, which appeared in the July 1990 issue of 8000 Plus, and the article on the US On-line service Compuserve, which appeared in 8000 Plus in September 1990. Back issues of the magazine can be obtained by using the special order form on page 52 of this issue, or by telephoning our Somerton office direct on (0458) 74011.

ELECTRONIC MAIL

E-mail provides a convenient, though not necessarily cheap, method of exchanging files between different computers.

Users are given their own electronic 'mailbox' (space on the host computer), in which messages and documents from other subscribers are stored. Telexes can also normally be sent and received through e-mail; faxes can be sent, though not received.

The largest e-mail service in Britain, Telecom Gold, is run by British Telecom. Phone 0800 200700 for details. An on-line demonstration is available.

There are a number of other e-mail services, some primarily dedicated to leisure/hobby users. Many charities and voluntary sector groups use Poptel/GeoNet, one of the largest European e-mail systems (Phone 071 249

2948). It is generally not very easy to exchange electronic mail between competing e-mail services.

One possibility is to use The Direct Connection (mentioned in last month's News Plus) who provide gateways between almost all e-mail providers worldwide. A monthly subscription costs £10 plus VAT; for more details phone 081 853 2283, or try an on-line demo on 081 853 3965. ➤

Viewdata

The French approached things better, giving away millions of free terminals to enable their viewdata service, Teletel, to become an established part of French life. BT have marketed their Prestel service less effectively.

Nevertheless, despite the lack of a good Prestel directory and the service's technical shortcomings, Prestel provides access to a wealth of useful on-line information. Prestel is also acting as host for the new PhoneBase service from BT (the on-line database service which saves you having to call up and pay Directory Enquiries for a number you want); Electronic Yellow Pages are also on Prestel. (Both these services can in addition be accessed direct) Phone 0800-200700 for details of Prestel (on-line demo database also available).

8000 Plus's regular Case in Point series looked at an independent viewdata system called Business Online. The service provides up to the minute information on a variety of subjects, including business, training and financial news. Business Online can be accessed via a modem and Sage's communications software Chit Chat. The service was masterminded by John Bonar, and you can obtain more details by telephoning (071) 7385154.

BULLETIN BOARDS/TELECONFERENCES

Bulletin boards are an established part of the comms world, often run by an enthusiastic sysop (system operator) from home, using a basic home computer and an ordinary phone line. They provide a forum for informal on-line discussion - about computers, comms, the state of the world, or anything else. It's all normally free. A more sophisticated bulletin board/teleconferencing service is

provided by CIX ('kicks'). CIX now includes a new teleconference designed specifically for teleworkers; this has been set up by the telework magazine *Live Wire*, which was published for the first time in April, 1991. CIX costs £15 registration, and thereafter a monthly minimum charge of £6.25 (further charges depend on usage). Information (voice) from (081) 390 8446 or (on-line) from 081 390 1244/081 399

5252. Highlands and Islands teleworkers may be interested in the Scottish based conferencing service Rurtel (047 982 688). For those near Manchester, the new Manchester Host is worth investigating (061 839 4212). The massive US on-line service CompuServe (reviewed in September 1990's 8000 Plus), is actively recruiting UK users. Phone the UK office in Bristol (0800 289458)

COMMERCIAL ON-LINE DATABASES

Turn your PCW into a comprehensive reference library, by going on-line to the many commercial databases now available. Although prices can seem very expensive (in some cases, £3 per minute), the secret is to save what you need to file, and not to attempt to read or print details while on-line.

Before using on-line data sources, it can pay to talk informally to sympathetic librarians in your area with on-line experience. Also worth contacting may be: UK On-line User Group (UKOLUG), c/o IIS, 40 Museum St, London WC1A 1LY. (Annual newsletter subscription £12.00).

Some on-line databases are marketed directly by the company producing them: generally you pay an initial registration fee, and then are charged on a usage basis. However, many databases are available through a 'host' service - a kind of electronic retailer. This is often the simplest route: once again, you choose which host(s) you want to use, register with them, and then pay an additional charge each time you go on-line.

The largest 'host' for on-line databases is probably the Californian-based Dialog

service, providing access to about 400 individual databases. Most are of US origin, though Dialog is now also acting as host for an increasing number of European databases. Dialog has a UK office in Oxford (0865 730275); it runs free introductory on-line sessions in London and elsewhere.

The main European rival to Dialog is the Switzerland-based Data-Star. Their London office can be contacted on 071 930 7646. Data-Star has a strong bank of business databases, many also available through Dialog.

Other large on-line hosts include EISA-IRS (071 323 7951), Orbit and BRS (both part of Robert Maxwell's on-line empire; contact 081 992 3456). The European Community has its own on-line service, ECHO; this is generally free to use. (ECHO, 010 352 488041). The British Library's bibliographical records are accessible through BLAISE-LINE; they also run the specialist medical facility BLAISE-LINK. (Phone 0937 546585).

Finally, some e-mail services also provide gateways into selected on-line databases. Telecom Gold, for example,

offers access to about fifteen primarily business databases, including FT's Profile service, an extremely useful full-text archive of past newspaper and magazine articles from Britain and around the world.

Until recent years, the existence of this wealth of on-line information was something of a trade secret, and most on-line searches were undertaken by trained information professionals, such as specialist librarians. Increasingly, however, database hosts and providers are trying to make their services more easily available to 'end-users' (that means us).

It's fair to say that they have some way to go yet. It can still take much too long to learn the conventions necessary to make effective searches (each host has different search commands).

It is also well-nigh impossible to work out which of the many possible routes to an individual database is likely to be the least expensive. Charging structures are very complex; while this may not matter if you are ICI, it's rather more important if you are surviving as a self-employed individual teleworker. Check the charges before you do anything else.

FAX OF THE MATTER

What about fax? While on-line computer comms is still something of a minority activity, facsimile transmission has arrived rapidly in the mainstream of business life.

In some ways, this is all very ridiculous. It makes little sense to feed into a fax machine a document, letter or spreadsheet which was originally produced by a computer. How illogical to have to print out the computer file as hard copy and then have it converted back into a form suitable for transmission by the fax machine's scanner. (It makes even less sense to use a fax if the recipient then has to re-type the document back into their own computer system!) But logic isn't everything. Fax machines are simple to use and easy to understand. They are also



The Amstrad FX9600T, *Which?* magazine's recommended buy

increasingly cheap to purchase. Amstrad are attempting to repeat their phenomenal PCW success with a range of low-cost fax machines, designed for home or small

business use. In fact, a recent *Which?* magazine report identified the Amstrad model FX9600T as one of its recommended buys. Don't be misled into thinking you need a second telephone line if you want to install a fax machine: you don't. Nevertheless, a second line can be sensible if you are teleworking and using the fax machine a lot; make sure the fax line number is ex-directory.

Some companies have already seen the potential of the fax machine as a delivery system for information. One pioneer has been the TSB: they offer to supply up-to-date bank statements to your fax machine (you order them by telephoning the bank's computerised home banking service).

THE PITFALLS

Don't assume that rural teleworking will automatically be a bed of roses. There are important financial, emotional and psychological implications to the idea of working from home, and it is sensible to investigate the likely disadvantages as carefully as the advantages. The authors of a recent academic study, 'Telework:

Towards the Elusive Office' summarise the issue like this: "For some it is a symbol of liberation from the daily grind of living in a suburb, commuting into the city, working from 9 to 5, a chance to get to know one's family and pursue new leisure interests. For others, it has become a symbol of isolation, exploitation and the end of any

possibility of temporary escape from the drudgery of housework and childcare." Wonderful as technology may be, it seems there are some things which it's better to do in person - like buttonholing your boss in the corridor at work. It is essential that you consider all the options before making the move to work at home.

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Live and Learn

Many of us would like to learn more, but don't have the time to attend classes after a day at work. So, why not let your PCW help? Tim Smith looks at three educational packages which aim to teach you at home

Variety is...

The software selected for this month's Beginners' Guide was chosen to show just what is on offer for different age groups. There are many more packages to choose from; check this month's Good Software File on page 69 to see what else is on offer! The range is quite impressive.

The three programs on show this month are probably the most diverse you will come across grouped together in 8000 Plus. Two of them are aimed firmly at the youngsters. The third is aimed at building confidence for 1992 by teaching the French language in practical applications rather than in terms of verb declension or sentence parsing. However, they all have one unifying factor; they aim to bring the process of learning into the home, and under your control via the PCW.

The computer has a long, and stormy history in education. On one hand you have the attitude which sees computers as business or play tools, not fit to be used in educational establishments. On the other, we have educators like Seymour Papert, the inventor of the Logo programming language (look at the system disc(s) which come with your PCW and you will find this language lurking there). This allows pupils to learn mathematics, geography and even

structured logic and programming. A third, and more divisive group has recently come to the fore in Japan and the United States. These are the theorists who want to take teachers out of the classroom and replace them completely with computers. The reasoning behind this is that each pupil can have a machine matched to his or her needs as they are constantly monitored by the program. This gives rise to quite a few questions as well as some practical problems. For example, how can you get a computer to do playground duty or organise sport?

Happily for us, the PCW retains an honourable face in the educational arena. The software released for it is for use in the home and so is not weighed down with any theoretical baggage which might detract from its potential as a micro-tech blackboard.

If you think about it, your PCW is an ideal supplement to a full education. For a start you can switch it off when you

want to. You can attend, or have your children attend, classes as and when it suits you. You can go back over elements which you haven't quite grasped without fear of embarrassment.

And best of all, while you are learning French, Maths, or any subject, you are also becoming more familiar with the machine in which you have invested your hard cash.

If you are buying packages like Fun School 3 for your children, then you can actively monitor their progress. And let's face it, the majority of children like to see images animated on a screen (think of those Turtles!) so the likelihood is that they will stick with their studies.

It should be kept in mind however, that all of the packages reviewed here, and any others which you might see for the PCW, are to be treated as supplementary aids rather than substitutes. Once you have a grounding in business French you have to get out there and use it to perfect your skills.

FUN SCHOOL 3

Database Software • £24.99 • (0625) 859333 • Europa House, Adlington, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

There are three packages in the Fun School range. These are for 5 year olds and under, 5 to 7 year olds, and over 7s. The version we are looking at here is aimed at the 5 to 7 year old age group.

"Not a lot of use to me," you might think, but think again. The Fun School series is available on nearly every home computer you could imagine and so is quite likely to be used in schools. In fact this is the intention of the software house, which proudly proclaims that the package 'Conforms to the national curriculum' in a red sticker on the front of the box. Consequently if you do have children, or if you are a grandparent whose grandchildren have access to a PCW, this will be of great help to the child.

For once, we have no hesitation in recommending this piece of software. Each of the bundles was put together by both experienced programmers and educationalists. This means that you get the best of both worlds - a large bonus as it should keep even the most errant child quiet for a few hours allowing you to catch up with that Protecto manual.

Fun School 5 to 7 comprises six modules, each of which is a test which begins in such simple style that you would be extremely worried if the average 6 year old was caught out by it.



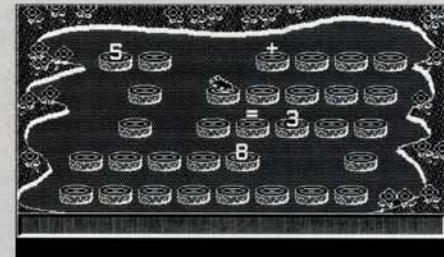
The opening screen displays a list of the learning games on offer

However each builds up over a period to a high level of testing. The six in question are as follows:

- 1 Toyshop: Excellent idea this, which will appeal to the child's natural sense of greed and get them to carry out some maths while training up the cognitive skills at the same time. The first step sees them choosing a named toy. From then on they have to choose toys which cost a certain amount. This ranges through some complex fractional calculations. Get the answer right and the shopkeeper smiles. Get it wrong and you are greeted with a sad frown.

2 Time: This teaches the child to tell the time by using a very pleasantly drawn clock in what appears to be a farmyard. Once again it starts easily and builds up.

3 Funtext: This one requires the help of a parent. It involves the child answering questions (for example, about dinosaurs), but also having to access the information needed for a correct



Geography for beginners in Journeys. That's Freddie the Frog by the way!

answer from a database. Complex enough to have non-computer familiar adults gasping. An excellent module.

4 Collect: Freddie Frog has to hop around a bunch of logs in order to carry out some sums. Because the 'maze' of logs is static this is probably the least challenging of the set.

5 Electricity: Again, an adult should be present if only to stop the child trying the circuit diagrams practically. This is aimed more at 11 year olds as it entails getting the child to understand and complete electronic circuits on screen.

6 Journey: The child has to guide Freddie the Frog on various journeys. It will teach left from right if nothing else!

Ease of use: 5/5
 Documentation: 5/5
 Range of features: 4/5
 Performance: 4/5

ULTIMATE SUMS

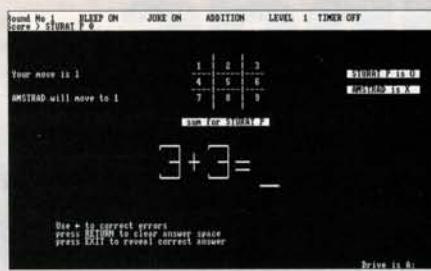
DGC Software Ltd • £14.95 • (0274)

636475 • 12 Stonecroft, Eccleshill,
Bradford BD2 2HW

It is difficult to say just where this little bundle falls in the great scheme of things. To keep the less grown-up among us amused and interested, there are two options. You can play a game of noughts and crosses in which each correctly answered sum gets you an X or a O. The second option allows you to select 'Joke On'. This is an original way to maintain the attention of a child in a subject area which is less than inspiring. If you provide the correct answer to a sum, then you are rewarded with a joke. It has to be said that these jokes are not the most original or side-splitting that we have come across, but nonetheless, they are a clever feature.

Ultimate Sums is a fairly basic program with limited graphics and ability. All the documentation is on disc - never a welcome feature, and perhaps especially unwelcome in an educational package, where the learning capacity of the user will be fully absorbed by the task at hand. Operating instructions would have been better as hard copy at the user's side.

The heart of Ultimate Sums is definitely in the right place. It sets out to instill the rudiments of Maths into the user by setting questions. This is all very well for the early levels; there are eight in each section with a score sheet for each one which is saved to the M: drive. One very useful

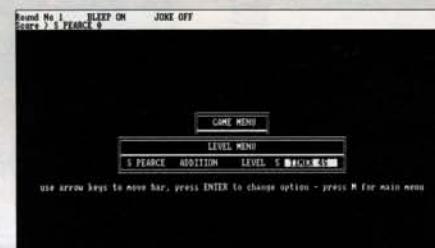


This game of 'noughts and crosses' is played by solving simple sums



When the levels get difficult, you've a good chance of seeing the 'wrong' cross!

feature is the ability to print this scoresheet out; this means that a child can be left to carry out the exercises by themselves, and you can check progress later on. This takes the pressure off the student, and allows the parent to have a permanent record of performance. One possible failing in the program occurs when you move up



Here you set the difficulty level and the 'game' that you want to play

to things like finding those loathsome square roots and squares. An element of education by explanation would have been a good thing here. It is all very well asking what the square of 17 is, and then telling the hapless user that they are wrong to say 12, but if no strategy has been given you may as well be asking the trajectory of a space shuttle to the moon.

Frankly, it would not be too difficult to program the functions of this package using Mallard BASIC, and doing so would probably teach you more about maths and your PCW.

On the whole, Ultimate Sums is a good piece of software, which will take the drudgery out of learning one of the least popular school subjects.

Ease of use: 5/5
Documentation: 3/5
Range of features: 3/5
Performance: 3/5

BUSINESS FRENCH

Apex Computer Services

£49.95 • (0273) 727 477

Duke House, 33 Waterloo Street, Hove,
Sussex, BN3 1AN

After using this package for a few days the urge was to start this overview with something along the lines of Des améliorations dans nous PCWing sont incroyable - but we managed to resist.

This bundle is aimed fairly and squarely at the person who has long since seen the back of a French class, doesn't actually want to be bothered with learning the language but does require a few useful phrases when travelling in France or any French speaking country.

Business French comes in six chunks:

1 Business: This enables you to chat with your European counterpart about such topics as packing, despatch and shipping, and money and finance. What would happen if you were asked anything which is not on the stock list of questions and answers is debatable!

2 Technical: This takes on board subjects like motion and physical change, shape and orientation, and tools, machines, instruments among others.

3 Travel: Whether you are going by air, sea or land you are catered for. And if you get bored at the board meeting there is also a section on hotels and sightseeing.

4 Restaurants: Here you are lead through main courses, desserts, and the wonderfully named 'miscellaneous foods' among other general gourmet-style terms.

5 Communications: This allows you to deal with complaints, business letters, and useful telephone language.

6 Social: This section takes in the very important French concern of relationships between people,



Here is the very comprehensive list of categories within Business French



Create your own category and build up a customised language for your interest

habits and customs, and social and 'polite' expressions. Basically, you are given the option of translating choice phrases either from French to English or vice versa. You are given the option of making a number of wrong answers before the correct one is filled in for you.

Probably the most useful section of the entire program in terms of actually learning French is the ability to create your own categories from real life situations. Say, for example, your business specialises in that commodity so beloved of 8000 Plus, widgets. And widget making involves a great many specialised terms. You can phone your French



The program translates business terminology between French and English

counterpart for the translations (working on the principle that they speak better English than you do French - a good assumption for most people unfortunately). You then enter these into your customised test section and away you go. This saves your partner from having to go through them all with you prior to your visit and means that you can teach yourself what you need to know, when you need to do it.

Business French is a good, solid product for those of us who need a basic knowledge of the language. And, of course, it is increasingly relevant with 1992 bearing down fast. It would be impressive to see how the program has been extended since 1988 when the review copy was made. The quality of programming indicates that plenty of thought has gone into it and that any improvements or embellishments should be worth the wait. Incidentally, if French does not appeal, then there are two other programs in the family - one is Spanish, and the other Italian. Each of these costs £49.95.

Ease of use: 5/5
Documentation: 4/5
Range of features: 4/5
Performance: 4/5

Listings

Martin Le Poidevin introduces two programs to pool your mind and mind your pools. Brighten up Saturday afternoons with Listings!

ROW OF 4.BAS by Keith Boothroyd

ROW_OF_4.BAS is a reworking of the old game of CONNECT4. All you have to do is get four of your counters in a row before the computer achieves the same result with its counters. Sounds simple? Is this just another version of noughts and crosses?

Well, no. The problem is that the grid in which you play (seven by six squares in size) is controlled by gravity. You drop a counter in at the top, and it falls (by dint of the PCW's remarkable GRAVITY utility) to the bottom available square in that column. This has the advantage of cutting down the number of squares that are available to you at any go - you have a choice of rows 2 to 8; on the down side, it means that you have to think very carefully about what opportunities you are opening up for the computer.

And the computer, with all its brain power, is a very clever opponent. It seems to have the knack of blocking your winning run, while at the same time putting itself into a position from which it can't lose.

Given time, you will discover tricks and tactics which will strengthen your hand, but our advice for the moment is: keep an eye on those diagonals!

And bear in mind that you always have the first go.

To fit all this into 43 lines is no mean feat - especially when you realise that the computer's "artificial intelligence" has to be included in those lines as well!

The key to the whole affair is a "two-dimensioned array", which is quietly given pride of place as the first

ROW OF 4..... Score:- Player 7 Computer 2							
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
COMPUTER 							
. COMPUTER COMPUTER COMPUTER 							
COMPUTER COMPUTER 							
COMPUTER COMPUTER COMPUTER COMPUTER 							
COMPUTER 							
. COMPUTER COMPUTER 							
. COMPUTER COMPUTER 							

Please wait !

Another tough battle reaches its climax as the computer and its human counterpart pit their wits in Row of 4. With a bit of practice, you'll soon be beating the PCW every time!

piece of code: DIM z(6,7). This tells the computer to reserve memory slots for not just one value of z, but for 42 values, which are to be stored in 6 groups of 7. So now we can call up any of those values by referring to its position - z(4,5) will be the fifth member of the 4th group.

Setting store

In practice, all the program is doing is storing the game's playing area in its memory in the easiest possible form. If we change the two values in brackets to (row,column) - so that they become coordinates of a sort - the whole concept as applied to this game becomes very much easier to comprehend.

In this instance only three values are stored in the grid. If the counter at a

certain position is the computer's, then v(r,c) is 5; if it is yours, then v(r,c) is 1. If it is blank, then the value stored is 0. This makes it simple for the computer to work out if anybody has won. If there are four consecutive squares (in any direction) which add up to 20, then the computer must have won; if four squares add up to 4 then you have won; otherwise, nobody has won!

There is one other nicety which more experienced programmers might want to think about. Instead of a long list of variables, Mr Boothroyd has used (in lines 320 and 330) DATA lines which are READ in line 180, and assigned to the variable names j...i. This happens four times, which makes it considerably neater than defining 40 different variables!

10 DIM z(6,7):p1\$="Please wait !":p2\$="Your turn":p3\$="I Win !"	1D12
20 hm\$=CHR\$(27)+"H":c1\$=CHR\$(27)+"E"+hm\$:m\$=CHR\$(149):dr=0	15C5
30 PRINT c1\$;:FOR t=1 TO 7:FOR y=1 TO 6:z(y,t)=0:NEXT y:kc(t)=0:NEXT t	2120
40 a\$=CHR\$(27)+CHR\$(112)+"COMPUTER"+CHR\$(27)+CHR\$(113):b\$=".PLAYER."	1999
50 p5\$="It's A Draw":p4\$="You Win":x\$=".":GOSUB 60:GOTO 130	1BA9
60 PRINT hm\$;"ROW OF 4";x\$;" Score:- Player ";v1;" Computer ";v2	1D59
70 PRINT:PRINT:FOR t=2 TO 8:PRINT SPC(4);t:SPC(3);:NEXT t:PRINT	223D
80 FOR y=1 TO 6:FOR q=1 TO 70:PRINT CHR\$(154);:NEXT q	1835
90 pass=0:PRINT:FOR t=1 TO 7:PRINT m\$;:IF z(y,t)=0 THEN PRINT x\$;	21A2
100 IF z(y,t)=5 THEN PRINT a\$; ELSE IF z(y,t)=1 THEN PRINT b\$;	1CF7
110 PRINT m\$;:NEXT t:PRINT:NEXT y:dr=dr+1	15DB
120 FOR q=1 TO 70:PRINT CHR\$(154);:NEXT q:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:RETURN	23EA

Lines 60-120 print the screen. The screen is totally re-drawn after every move, which keeps the code short. However, it does add

```

130 ky$=INKEY$:IF ky$="" THEN 130 ELSE IF ky$<"2" OR ky$>"8" THEN 130 1C5F
140 w=ASC(ky$)-49:IF z(1,w)<>0 THEN 130 105C
150 FOR y=2 TO 6:IF z(y,w)<>0 THEN z(y-1,w)=1:GOTO 170 1713
160 NEXT y:z(6,w)=1:GOTO 170 0BD6
170 GOSUB 60:PRINT p1$:IF (kc(w)=1)*(z(kr(w),w)=1) THEN kc(w)=0 1AA1

```

You tell the computer which column to put your counter in, and it calculates how far it should fall

```

180 FOR lap=1 TO 3:FOR loop=1 TO 4:READ j,k,l,m,d,e,f,g,h,i 1A94
190 FOR r=j TO k:FOR c=1 TO m 0D74
200 tot=(z(r,c))+(z(r+g,c+d))+(z(r+h,c+e))+(z(r+i,c+f)) 1628
210 IF tot=20 THEN 310 ELSE IF tot=4 THEN PRINT p4$:SPC(7):GOTO 420 1E48
220 IF (lap=2)*(tot=15 OR tot=3) THEN GOSUB 340:IF pass=1 THEN 290 1BBE
230 IF (lap=3)*(tot=10 OR tot=2) THEN GOSUB 340:IF pass=1 THEN 290 1B9C
240 NEXT c:NEXT r:NEXT loop:RESTORE:NEXT lap:f=0 1B7B
250 f=f+1:pass=0:w=INT(RND*7)+1:IF z(1,w)<>0 THEN 250 192E
260 IF (kc(w)=1)*(z(kr(w),w)=0)*(f(8)) THEN 250 118D
270 FOR y=2 TO 6:IF z(y,w)<>0 THEN z(y-1,w)=5:GOTO 290 1736
280 NEXT y:z(6,w)=5 07C8
290 RESTORE:GOSUB 60:IF dr>42 THEN PRINT p5$:GOTO 430 196B

```

This section checks whether there are any winning lines, or lines which are near to winning. It also checks for a draw

```

300 IF tot=20 THEN 310 ELSE PRINT p2$:SPC(7):GOTO 130 18B7
310 PRINT p3$:SPC(9):GOTO 420 0C5B
320 DATA 1,6,1,4,1,2,3,0,0,0,1,3,1,7,0,0,0,1,2,3 0CAB
330 DATA 1,3,1,4,1,2,3,1,2,3,4,6,1,4,1,2,3,-1,-2,-3 0D7A
340 IF z(r,c)=0 THEN nr=r:nc=c:GOSUB 390:IF pass=1 THEN RETURN 1EEE
350 IF z(r+g,c+d)=0 THEN nr=r+g:nc=c+d:GOSUB 390:IF pass=1 THEN RETURN 22D3
360 IF z(r+h,c+e)=0 THEN nr=r+h:nc=c+e:GOSUB 390:IF pass=1 THEN RETURN 22E9
370 IF z(r+i,c+f)=0 THEN nr=r+i:nc=c+f:GOSUB 390:IF pass=1 THEN RETURN 22FF
380 RETURN 0515

```

Lines 340-380 deal with the computer's moves to block your lines or add to its own

```

390 IF nr=6 THEN z(nr,nc)=5:pass=1:RETURN 155F
400 IF z(nr+1,nc)<>0 THEN z(nr,nc)=5:pass=1:tot=tot+5:RETURN 1EF2
410 IF lap=2 THEN kc(nc)=1:kr(nc)=nr+1:RETURN ELSE RETURN 1C7C
420 IF tot=20 THEN v2=v2+1 ELSE v1=v1+1 11C0
430 INPUT "Again ? (Y)or(N)";q$:IF q$="Y" OR q$="Y" THEN RESTORE:GOTO 20 2097

```

Notice that there is no 'END' command. If the answer to the question in line 430 is not 'Y', the computer goes to the next line...which doesn't exist, and the program ends automatically

POOLSCHK.BAS by G G Tozzo

Lots of people do the pools. There are the form buffs, who call on a deep well of knowledge about the game and its players. Then there are the "pattern pundits", who work on systems, and follow proven methods.

Finally, there are those who read their tea-leaves, pick numbers which have been lucky during the week, or simply put a pin into the coupon.

There are even those who have a fixed set of numbers recorded with the pools company, which are used every week as their entry. Which is not to forget those who find themselves with a couple of minutes to spare on a Saturday afternoon, and scan the fixtures 'just for fun'. All these people have one thing in

```

ENTRY 3

24 points = 1
23 points = 8
22.5 points = 8
22 points = 0
21.5 points = 28
21 points = 0

```

These are the changes to be made for Paul Swinner's pools last Saturday. He makes 5 entries, so needs to define e\$ 5 times

common (besides the dream of large prizes). They have to check their coupon.

```

Ok
edit 250
250 FOR i=1 TO 5
delete 530-570
Ok
530 e$(1)="04061034354547505157"
540 e$(2)="04061127284042454851"
550 e$(3)="03060912182735434748"
560 e$(4)="01021015182526274555"
570 e$(5)="05071113172135364550"
580 RETURN

```

And this is the result. The lucky man will now be rich, and he knows it quick, because he reads 8000 Plus!

A tiresome little chore - but do you dare miss it for one week?

Listings

Which is where POOLSCHK.BAS comes in. This program will calculate the results for all permutations of 8 from 10 pools coupon entries. Other perms could be calculated with little modification.

All it takes from you is to enter your predictions as you fill in your coupon, and save them as part of the program; then on Saturday afternoon, reload the program and enter the results of all the games as directed.

When entering the results, by the way, terminate each input by pressing [RETURN] without a number.

After a few seconds, the computer will display the news, good or bad, of any of your lines which have scored 21 points or more.

The idea of the Treble Chance 8 from 10 is simple. All you have to do is select 8 matches which you think will end in score draws. But the chances against that happening are phenomenal, so the companies give you the chance to nominate a larger number of matches. All the possible permutations of 8 matches from those ten are now valid entries on your form, a total of 45 'lines' in all. So with one entry of 8 out 10, you

have 45 chances of winning.

The scoring is worked out as follows: if one of the matches in the line is a score draw, you get 3 points; if a no-score draw you get 2 points, with 1 for a win by the away team, and 1 for a win by the home team. If one of your lines gains 24 points, then you are a winner; anything close to it and you're still in with a chance.

Setting up

So then, how do you set up your program? The key is in lines 530 and following. These are your predictions, each line of the program here representing one set of 10 coupon numbers. To enter your numbers, erase everything between the speechmarks in line 530. Now reconstruct the line, exactly as before, but with your numbers. They must be packed together - no spaces or commas - and each number must have 2 digits. So, 7 would be entered as 07, 4 as 04 and so on. In the end, you should have 20 digits between the speechmarks. This becomes e\$(1). As it stands, the program is set up to deal with 4 entries (each producing 45 lines, remember);

e\$(1) is the first entry, e\$(2) the second, and so on.

If you have a number smaller or greater than 4, then simply enter the information here, with e\$(n) growing each time. Make sure that each entry has 10 numbers (twenty digits); if necessary, push line 570 further down, create new lines, and renumber everything accordingly; but make sure that the very last line of all says simply "RETURN".

The maximum number of entries you can have is 10; internal space can be provided for more by a DIM statement.

The only other thing you must do is the second number in line 250. Instead of 4, this should be the same number as you have entries. So if you have 1 entry, it should read 1; for 10 it should read 10.

Once that information is entered (and you should check it to make sure it is right), save the program to disc using a different name to the original program - MYTRIES.BAS should do.

Once the results are known, load up the altered version of the program and then run it. We hope the results are to your liking - and that you scoop some winnings into the bargain. Just remember who told you about the program!

10 GOSUB 530:GOSUB 510:draw\$="" :noscore\$="" :away\$=""	1657
20 DEF FNloc\$(r%,c%)=CHR\$(27)+"Y"+CHR\$(r%+32)+CHR\$(c%+32)	1462
30 DEF FNc\$=CHR\$(27)+"E"+CHR\$(27)+"H"	0D79
40 DEF FNrv\$=CHR\$(27)+"p":DEF FNxrv\$=CHR\$(27)+"q"	136E
50 PRINT FNc\$	05F6
60 REM : ENTER THE DRAWS, NO SCORE DRAWS AND AWAY WINS	1BFE
70 tp=3:type\$="SCORE DRAW":i=0:GOSUB 110	13A2
80 tp=2:type\$="NO SCORE DRAW":i=0:GOSUB 110	148C
90 tp=1:type\$="AWAY WIN":i=0:GOSUB 110	1217

The first few lines of the program set up the variables and other information. Notice the use of user-defined functions for clearing the screen and positioning text

100 GOTO 230: REM : GO TO DO THE CALCULATING	1548
110 i=i+1	035C
120 PRINT FNc\$;FNloc\$(12,26);"PLEASE ENTER ";type\$;" NUMBER	
" ;i;" > " ;:LINE INPUT x\$	22AF
130 IF x\$="" THEN RETURN	0C5F
140 IF VAL(x\$)<1 OR VAL(x\$)>58 GOTO 120	0F09
150 IF LEN(x\$)=1 THEN x\$="0"+x\$	0BE7
160 IF INSTR(draw\$,x\$) THEN 120	0CEO
170 IF INSTR(noscore\$,x\$) THEN 120	0F5F
180 IF INSTR(away\$,x\$) THEN 120	0CFB

'INSTR (x,y)' can be used as a comparison tool. It will take the same elements of two lists, compare them, and give the answer zero if they are not the same, and something else (!) if they are

190 IF tp=3 THEN draw\$=draw\$+", "+x\$	0E3A
200 IF tp=2 THEN noscore\$=noscore\$+", "+x\$	130D
210 IF tp=1 THEN away\$=away\$+", "+x\$	0E23
220 GOTO 110	04A7
230 REM : THE FOLLOWING CODE CALCULATES THE SCORES	1AF1
240 PRINT FNc\$;FNloc\$(12,34);FNrv\$;"W O R K I N G...";FNxrv\$	17B0
250 FOR i=1 TO 4	06A2
260 x\$=e\$(i)	03B7
270 REM : CALCULATE ALL THE PERMUTATIONS FOR EACH ENTRY	1E86
280 FOR k=1 TO 10	070B
290 FOR l=(k+1) TO 10	06F0

```
300 tot=0
310 FOR j=1 TO 10
320 t$=MID$(x$,((j*2)-1),2)
```

045D

07D5

MIDS(x%,y) can be used to pull bits of information from the middle of a 'string' of text or numbers

```
330 IF j=k THEN GOTO 390
340 IF j=1 THEN GOTO 390
350 IF INSTR(draw$,t$) THEN tot=tot+3:GOTO 390
360 IF INSTR(noscore$,t$) THEN tot=tot+2:GOTO 390
370 IF INSTR(away$,t$) THEN tot=tot+1.5:GOTO 390
380 tot=tot+1
390 NEXT
400 IF tot=24 THEN a=a+1 ELSE IF tot=23 THEN b=b+1 ELSE IF
tot=22.5 THEN c=c+1
410 IF tot=22 THEN d=d+1 ELSE IF tot=21.5 THEN e=e+1
ELSE IF tot=21 THEN f=f+1
420 NEXT:NEXT
```

0A50

0A55

15A9

191D

1678

06B7

0431

2127

21A9

07C0

Notice how many different FOR...NEXT loops there are in this section, which checks all the permutations

```
430 REM : DISPLAY THE RESULTS FOR EACH ENTRY
440 PRINT FNc$;FNloc$(5,37);FNrv$;"ENTRY ";i;FNxrv$
450 PRINT FNloc$(9,35);"24 points = ";a;FNloc$(10,35);"23 points = ";b
460 PRINT FNloc$(11,35);"22.5 points = ";c;FNloc$(12,35);"22 points = ";d
470 PRINT FNloc$(13,35);"21.5 points = ";e;FNloc$(14,35);"21 points = ";f
480 GOSUB 510:NEXT
490 PRINT FNloc$(22,25);"PROGRAM COMPLETE, HIT RETURN TO END":LINE INPUT any$
500 PRINT FNC$:END
```

179E

175F

1D63

1DD3

1DEA

084D

2788

07FF

The section from line 430 creates what you actually see on screen

```
510 a=0:b=0:c=0:d=0:e=0:f=0: RETURN: REM : RESETS COUNTER VARIABLES
520 REM : SET UP YOUR COUPON ENTRIES HERE
530 e$(1)="07121530314346474851"
540 e$(2)="03080912232430374754"
550 e$(3)="04091315192730324158"
560 e$(4)="01020506134142444548"
570 RETURN
```

211E

16CE

083C

0823

083F

0819

The lines at the end are what need to be changed for your own purposes. Remember always to end with a line that says "RETURN"

HOW TO TYPE IN A LISTING

The first thing to do is to boot up CP/M, by loading the disc into the machine at turn-on time; when it settles down type in the word BASIC and hit [RETURN].

You will be given a bit of information about Mallard BASIC, and then the prompt "Ok". You can now begin to type in the program.

Each line begins with a number. This must be typed in, along with the text that follows it, but not the list of numbers on the right hand side (these are part of a checking procedure we publish from time to time).

Make sure that what you type is exactly what is on the page, especially in terms of punctuation. One semi-colon instead of colon may not seem much to you, but it could spell disaster for the program. Be careful, as well, that you differentiate properly between "0" (the number zero) and "O" (the capital "O"), and between "1" (the number "1") and

the lower case "L". From such small errors, great crashes flow. If you do spot an error in a line as you are typing it in, use the cursor keys to go back and amend it.

Once you are sure that a line is typed in correctly, then hit the [RETURN] button and go on to the next one. If you subsequently notice a mistake, type "edit", followed by the line number and [RETURN], and you will be given the chance to make your correction. Once you have typed in the whole program, check that everything is there as it should be by typing "list" [RETURN]. The whole program will scroll past you. To stop it at any point press [F5], and to restart it press [F5] again.

If all is present and correct, save your program to disc by typing "save" followed by the program name, which must be in quotation marks. Now comes the moment of truth. Type run [RETURN].

If all has gone well, it will work first time. If not, you may be given an error message, often with a line number attached (which may or may not help - it can often be that the line over which the computer gets stuck will be perfectly OK in itself, but it just happens to be the point at which an earlier mis-type becomes critical) so that you can rectify the fault. If there is no fault there, or no line number, check the rest of the program with a fine toothcomb.

And if you have made any changes or improvements, don't forget to save the updated version of the program (use the same filename and the old, bugged version will automatically be deleted from the disc).

When you want to use the program again you must first load BASIC as before, the type: "LOAD "filename" [RETURN]. It can then be used as before, by typing RUN [RETURN].

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RB2741FNRD	PCW8256 Fabric Red	4.50	4.09	3.75
RB2741FNBL	PCW8256 Fabric Blue	4.50	4.09	3.75
RB2742FNGR	PCW8256 Fabric Brown	4.50	4.09	3.75
RB2746MS	PCW8256 Fabric Green	4.50	4.09	3.75
RB2746MS	PCW9512 Carbon Black *Reduced price	2.33	2.10	1.90
RB2746FN	PCW9512 Fabric Black *Reduced price	2.25	2.15	2.00
RB2746FN	PCW9512 Fabric Red	3.89	3.50	3.18
RB2746FNBL	PCW9512 Fabric Blue	3.89	3.50	3.18
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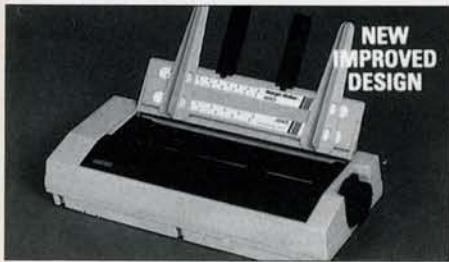
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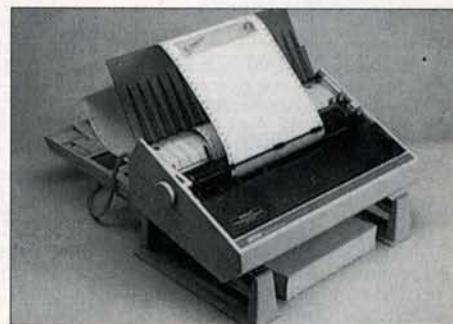
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THE GOOD Software FILE

These pages provide a comprehensive guide to the Amstrad PCW software. Published in three monthly parts, this time it's the turn of Databases, Educational Software, Communications and Programming Languages. We've set out to cover every important piece of software we could lay our hands on, and to give you enough information to decide whether they are suitable for you.

All software will run on both the 9512 and the 8000 series machines, though the former's daisywheel printer cannot print graphical output.

The selection isn't comprehensive, but the software listed here represents what we think is the best of that currently available.

As well as a brief summary of what they do, the main Plus and Minus points for each program are listed – Pluses have a ▲ by them, Minuses a ▼.

Those we think are particularly noteworthy have a corner flash. Have fun window shopping!

DATABASES

There are broadly two different types of database, and which suits you best depends, of course, on what you want it for.

Firstly there's the simple card index substitute. For many home users, this will be the kind of thing you want – all it does is store your address book or stock items so that you can easily look them up.

A more sophisticated option is the programmable database. With these, in addition to allowing simple card index retrieval there is a command language which allows you to analyse the data on the cards. For example, you could automatically add up the money owed to you by all your customers from Yorkshire. To make best use of this kind of facility, you will need to be able to understand a little programming, although it's not too hard really.

A bit of jargon now. A database is said to consist of records – this is just like a card in a conventional card file, with all someone's details on it. Each record is composed of fields – a field is a single entry on a card, like someone's name, or age, or postcode.

The thing that makes a database special is an index. You might be able to hold your address book as a simple list in a word processor document, but if it gets large then this becomes unwieldy. An index means that the database has worked out which order records should be in, so it can go straight to the one you want without looking at lots of others first.

The field that you use as your index (e.g. someone's surname) is said to be a key field, and can be looked up very fast compared to "non-key" fields. A good database will allow multiple keys, meaning that it can look up data just as fast for a variety of types of information.

MASTERFILE 8000

£49.95 • Campbell Systems • 0378 77762/3

A specially written PCW version of the successful database sold on other Amstrad computers. It is fully menu controlled, and makes good use of the PCW's special screen and keys. It can deal with up to 8 separate data files at once, so can cope with relational databases. Screen (but not printed output) can be elaborately laid out with boxes, lines etc.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Works fast
- ▲ Wide range of layout options
- ▲ Handles 'relational' files
- ▲ Plenty of good example files
- ▲ Can do arithmetic calculations within its records
- ▼ Capacity limited by size of M drive – best on an 8512
- ▼ Takes a while to learn all the features

CAMBASE II

£60 + VAT • Cambrian Software • 0766 831878

New version of the old favourite PCW database. Most important change is the Copy Filespec facility. You can set up a new database with potentially more entries than you've made provision for using the information from the original database. You can also change the fields to suit another set-up.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Quick and efficient to use
- ▲ You can set up a database blueprint (Filespec) which you can test thoroughly before entering data
- ▲ Includes powerful features like conditionals, loops, field validation, and specified layouts
- ▲ Simple parts of the program are well covered in the manual
- ▼ Can't use the memory bad news for 8256 users
- ▼ You have to guess how to use the more advanced features
- ▼ Not much room for prompts

▼ Tendency to crash occasionally in Filespec

LOCofile

£34.95 • Locomotive • 0306 740606

The indexed pop-up database that runs from within LocoScript 2 and that goes even further toward turning LocoScript 2 into a completely integrated software package. Unlike most databases empty records take up almost no space on disc. This allows large record cards to be defined even if they won't always be used. Records pop up very quickly without having to exit from your document. Works best when used in conjunction with LocoMail.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Unusually efficient use of disc space
- ▲ Can alter existing index – a very powerful feature indeed
- ▲ Automatically upgrades your LocoScript, LocoMail and LocoSpell to version 2.2
- ▲ Sample databases help you get a better feel for the program
- ▲ Very flexible when designed the record format
- ▼ Carries out searches on partial strings – ideal for when dealing with incomplete information

CHIBASE 3.0

£29.95 • Chiasma • 06333 60996

The updated version of the 'free format' database. You type in the text, mark the words to be indexed and treat the file as a database. The updated version allows you to import and export ASCII data files and a chain delete option enables you to work your way methodically through the database deleting the records you don't want while keeping those that you do.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Good amend, sort and recall features
- ▲ You can edit without a word processor
- ▲ Searches quickly through data
- ▲ Great for storing large amounts of data where the subject matter is variable
- ▲ Useful record template
- ▼ Can't run from M drive

DATASTORE II

£39.95 • Digita International • 0395 270273

Ideal for the novice, Datastore II allows you to remove the tedium from filing, updating and organising information. 32000 records, 32 fields, fast search facility. Function keys can have phrases assigned to them. Good for uses where the emphasis is on printed output.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Flexible range of print commands
- ▲ Simple to use
- ▲ Calculation facilities
- ▼ Need to preset maximum no. of records before you start
- ▼ Slow at browsing through

DELTA

£99.99 • Compsoft • 0483 425925

Delta is another of the heavyweights, like dBase II and Condor, but unlike them is fully menu driven. Although the screen layouts are fully flexible, there is a default "quick" layout so you don't have to sweat at defining your own. It could use better record indexing facilities. Particularly good for writing applications, once you have ploughed through the large manual.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Records can contain up to 90 fields, plus groups of fields that may be repeated
- ▲ Screen layout can be user defined, or "quick" mode used
- ▲ Single page letter writer provides detailed mail merge
- ▲ Processes can be defined, and run from user defined menus, for ease of use by others
- ▲ Very full, and quite readable, manual
- ▼ Only one field may be used for indexing
- ▼ Very big program – a PCW8256 would be hard pushed
- ▼ Some of the menu operations are unforgiving to errors

MINI OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

£39.99 • Database Software • 0625 859333

The Mini Office database retains its original format. It's a pretty standard card index type, similar to First Base. Good range of selection operations and arithmetic on fields. Can sort over a combination of fields and print out a variety of smart layouts, and you can have up to 255 fields.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Easy to use and intuitive
- ▲ Can use the data in the word processor
- ▲ Powerful selection and sort facilities
- ▲ Arithmetic on fields
- ▲ Test print facility lets you check your labels will print okay
- ▲ One command makes global changes

POCKET INFOSTAR

£69.50 • MicroPro/DRA • 0386 841181

Consists of two large programs, DataStar and ReportStar (both available independently). DataStar is a conventional database, with screen card layout and indexing. ReportStar then generates the printed output, either from DataStar or CalcStar files. Powerful if you can use them, but the suite is horrifically overcomplicated, and the documentation just incomprehensible.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ DataStar is a quite good database with indexing and calculated fields.
- ▲ "Transaction processing" feature allows cross referencing of data files.
- ▲ Can be integrated with other Pocket products, eg WordStar.
- ▲ Can take up to 255 fields per record
- ▼ Two volume manual set is very badly organised.
- ▼ There are separate programs to run for form design, data entry and reporting.
- ▼ Operation is all by obscure command keys, à la WordStar.

DBASE II

£56.35 (retail price) • Centresoft • 021 625 3399

The WordStar of database packages. Recently licensed "cheaply" for Amstrad machines, dBase II is a market leader in business computing. As you would expect, this means it is very powerful but very complex. It has a procedure language to allow you to write programs to manipulate the data, and you can construct index files for really fast access to large databases. If you can make the effort to learn it, it'll serve you well.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Powerful command language for customised programs
- ▲ Indexing facility makes large databases fast to handle
- ▲ Can handle very big databases
- ▲ The data can be fairly easily altered after its entry
- ▼ Manual is daunting (but there are plenty of independent books on the market)
- ▼ Can't easily alter the screen record layout
- ▼ For an expensive package, you still only get 32 fields per record
- ▼ Generally unfriendly unless you have some programming skills

FIRST BASE

£29.95 • Minerva • 0392 437756

Billed as a simple database for the first time user, First Base is quite a competent cheap card index. The manual is computer printed, and weak on diagrams which doesn't help things. One weakness is getting printed results out of First Base - either you settle for crude lists, or you have to create a template in LocoScript which is awkward to do. But overall, it's pretty good value for money.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Can alter the index field at any time
- ▲ Simple to use screen editing make data entry easy
- ▲ Good value as a simple card index lookup system
- ▲ Can easily browse through the database picking out a set by hand
- ▼ Manual is badly laid out and generally difficult
- ▼ Producing printed output is awkward

POPULAR RETRIEVE

£61 + VAT • Sagesoft • 091 2131555

A high-power package that is relatively easy to use with password security if desired, calculations, automatic counting or deletion of sets of records satisfying given conditions. It also has sophisticated sort and select commands, and can change the structure of an existing database. All this is done by a set of commands rather like a programming language. Printed formats are rather limited though and the program insists on using both drives, making use of an 8256 impractical.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Easy to use for a powerful package
- ▲ Advanced sorting and selection commands
- ▲ Subsets can be written to files
- ▲ Can count or delete subsets with one command
- ▲ Labelling/mailmerging routines included
- ▲ Can change structure of existing database
- ▼ Impossibly big program for 8256
- ▼ Printed output limited - must use mailmerge

SCRIPT2BASE/TEXT2BASE

£29.95 each • Encyclasoft • 0270 811890

Two free-form databases to be used with LocoScript and Protext respectively. Complete rewrites of FT=DB, the beauty of these databases is that you first create all your text on the word processor and import it as an ordinary (non-ASCII) text file into the database. You then mark all the words you want to see indexed as keywords so that you can go on to compile indexes and carry out searches.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Allows you to organise your collection of discs like an

- ▲ encyclopaedia
- ▲ Can construct new files made up of selected parts of existing ones
- ▲ Can send any part of a document to the printer on a line-by-line basis
- ▼ No text-editing facilities within the databases themselves
- ▼ Dreadful documentation

SMARTCARD

£80 + VAT • Pecan Software • 0272 425012

A conventional card index database which is now the nearest thing available to Cardbox. Small and fast, you can sort the records, index up to three fields and do simple arithmetic in fields. Can't put background text (eg. titles) on records or printouts.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Good clear screens
- ▲ Plenty of on screen help
- ▲ Fast and high capacity
- ▲ Easy to use
- ▼ Can't put background text on printed reports
- ▼ No way of exporting data for mailmerge

MICROFILE (SOLD IN THE MICRO COLLECTION)

£49.95 • Saxon Computing • 0964 550697

Microfile is a well implemented simple database, driven by plenty of menus and on-screen prompts. It's fast and has good screen control, although it has some size restrictions. Microfile comes as part of a software suite, "The Micro Collection", which is good value (Microfile, Microwrite, MicroSpread, Flexilabel and Lock-It).

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ The price includes competent word processing, spread sheet, labelling and encryption programs
- ▲ Plenty of menus and on screen prompting
- ▲ Very flexible formatting for screen layout and printing
- ▲ Numeric fields can be expressions to be calculated
- ▲ Indexing is fast and can be on several fields
- ▼ Maximum number of fields per record is only 20
- ▼ Limited facilities for totalling up fields in a database

EDUCATIONAL

Educational Software is designed as an aid to traditional teaching, not an alternative. Its main use is in re-inforcing traditional learning done elsewhere and providing the stimulus of a different approach. It can also be especially useful in rote learning and improving the speed at which problems are solved.

BUSINESS FRENCH (GERMAN/ITALIAN/Spanish)

£49.95 each • Apex Computing Services • 0273 727477

Four language learning packages which enable the Euro-conscious professional to get to grips with commercial jargon in another tongue. Areas covered are business, technical, travel, restaurants, communications and social - all with separate subsections to ensure that every eventuality is covered. A basic knowledge of the language concerned is, however, essential.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Fun and easy to use
- ▲ Comprehensive range of vocabulary
- ▼ Program needs cassettes to be really good
- ▼ Some poor screen displays

KEY CRASH COURSE

£24.95 • Iansyst • 071 607 0187

A fairly traditional typing tutor, taking you through basic keyboard exercises. There's a lot of explanatory text, which gets in the way second time around. Definitely competent, but a bit boring.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Mostly avoids boring letter drills
- ▲ Very full on-screen information guides you along
- ▲ "Fast" option cuts out some text if it gets repetitive
- ▼ Not particularly imaginative use of graphics
- ▼ It doesn't always ensure that the cursor is properly aligned with the exercise text

2 FINGERS TOUCH TYPING

£24.95 • Iansyst • 071 607 0187

Despite its provocative name, a useful typing tutor in that it specifically caters for people who can already get by on keyboards with two fingers. You are gradually introduced to touch typing, so your speed doesn't drop while you learn. Fills a necessary slot in the Typing Tutor market.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Suitable for improving two finger typists without much drop in speed
- ▲ Full on screen instructions
- ▲ Exercise material is interesting text, not letter drills
- ▼ Explanation text is annoyingly verbose in some lessons
- ▼ It doesn't always ensure that the cursor is properly aligned with the exercise text

GIANTKILLER

£17.35 + VAT • Topologika • 0733 244682

A mathematics adventure game loosely based on Jack and the Beanstalk. Lots of intriguing puzzles which should stimulate any student up to GCSE standard. Not the best adventure game ever written but great for making mathematics fun!

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Puzzles plausibly integrated into scenario
- ▲ Progression of game is simple and well defined
- ▲ Puzzles introduce a lot of valid mathematics
- ▲ Program understands only very simple commands
- ▼ Saving a position takes a move - can be fatal
- ▼ Won't be of particular help in exams

ANIMAL/VEGETABLE/MINERAL WORLD WISE

£14.95 • Bourne Educational • 0794 523301

Aimed at the younger market, 7-15 year olds. Both these programs work by learning as the child uses them. Think of an object and the computer tries to guess it. If it is wrong, the child is asked for a question which would allow the PCW to be right next time, and it learns.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Can be used as many times as the child's imagination holds out
- ▲ Performance can be analysed by a teacher after a session
- ▲ As you build up a base of objects and questions, they can be saved for reuse
- ▼ It needs a lot of typing, hence a lot of supervision
- ▼ The PCW starts with only two objects known, so it takes time to get going
- ▼ Documentation has hardly been altered from cassette based versions
- ▼ Since it is for young children, more imaginative use of the screen would be nice

BETTER SPELLING

£16.95 • School Software Ltd • 010 353 61 45399

This is a spelling course aimed at the 8 to adult age group. It consists of a series of well organised, short lessons each dealing with one topic, like plurals or which version of there/their/they're to use in a sentence. The use of the PCW screen is rather unimaginative, and doesn't hold your attention.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Well thought out lessons to emphasise particular points
- ▲ Teaches words in a sentence context as well as in isolation
- ▲ Lessons can be picked in any order from a menu
- ▲ Seems to be proof against mischievous key pressing
- ▼ Boring use of the screen doesn't grab interest
- ▼ No instructions come as to how to use the program.

CHEMISTRY/BIOLOGY/PHYSICS

£22.95 each • School Software • 010 353 61 45399

These two are fairly traditional question-and-answer tests. You are faced with a choice of 10 topics, and then asked 10 or so questions each, where you have to fill in the blank in a statement. There are preamble notes beforehand, and if you get it wrong you are given a clue. Aimed at 12-16 year olds.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Questions would challenge a GCSE pupil well
- ▲ Preamble notes introduce topics
- ▼ The fill in the blank questioning style has little flexibility for different answers
- ▼ No option to add questions for a specialised syllabus
- ▼ Some careless errors, like incorrect facts and hard to decipher chemical formulae

MICRO MATHS

£24.99 • LCL • 0491 579345

Supposedly covering 8 to adult ages, this seems an O-level type program, covering topics from calculus to tables. A good

implementation on the PCW with proper use of the screen. Questions are picked at random from a pool, so may repeat but never run out. Replies to questions are typed in mathematical notation, like X^2+3 .

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ You can pause to use BASIC as a calculator while you think
- ▲ 'Unlimited' question set
- ▲ Comes with a 'free' book of AEB O level questions
- ▲ Good hints and explanations
- ▼ Questions in a topic repeat occasionally
- ▼ Some frills, like the clock and beeper, are annoying
- ▼ No flexibility to add questions for a particular syllabus

AMSTAT 1,2,3,4,6 AND 7

£28 - £40 • SC Coleman Ltd • 0530 415919

A suite of six statistical routines including a business analysis program, forecasting and resource management. Individual prices range from £27.95 to £39.95. Very sophisticated, and perhaps because of that, a little awkward for beginners.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Good range of statistical functions
- ▲ Good manual
- ▲ Can produce good quality graphical results
- ▼ Some editing procedures very long winded
- ▼ Needs some expertise to use properly
- ▼ Weak on checking that input data is reasonable.

ULTIMATE QUIZ

£9.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 636475

Ten quizzes on topics as diverse as the Highway Code and the Italian language. Clean screens and an easy to use program make Ultimate Quiz an excellent entertainment and good value for money, too.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Optional noughts and crosses game included with either quiz
- ▲ Incorporates an editing file for easy updating of questions
- ▲ It's very versatile - up to 8 people can play
- ▲ None of the questions are repeated
- ▼ Some of the questions are a little esoteric

ULTIMATE SUMS

£9.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 636475

Another fine piece of educational software from DGC. The computer quite simply throws up a series of sums which you (or your child) are required to answer. There are lots of little extras: graphics, jokes, a timer, competitions for up to 8 players and various levels of difficulty, right up to cube roots. A program for all the family!

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Will appeal to all age groups at all levels
- ▲ Includes facility to print out scoresheets
- ▲ Great way to learn an unpopular subject
- ▲ Lots of different options
- ▼ Challenges are a little slow to load

CROSSGRID

£9.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 636475

"Crossword puzzles without clues" is how the packaging describes this program. Instead, a grid of numbers is presented to the player, each number representing a letter. The skill is to analyse the possible combinations and produce words. Various levels of difficulty mean that it is suitable for all ages - although some of the words, even in the lower levels, can be rather advanced. Ideal for the adult crossword fan, too.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Easy to install
- ▲ Variety of challenge levels
- ▲ Ideal for lateral thinkers
- ▲ Totally addictive
- ▼ No competitive element
- ▼ Some very obscure words

SUPERMATHS

£16.95 • Abacus Software • 0689 83629

Specifically designed for the PCW, this program exercises basic numeracy skills in children. Questions are asked in quick fire volleys of ten and cover all four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and so on). Scores are automatically recorded.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Special original Test and Worksheet modes included the latter is ideal for teachers
- ▲ Very efficient scoring method
- ▲ Numeracy level is very basic
- ▲ New version has enhanced screen displays
- ▼ Some of the questions may start to look familiar after a while

MARKSHEET

£16.95 • Abacus Software • 0689 83629

Aimed at the teacher rather than at the class, this vertical software utility will add up your end of term marks for each pupil; it will then keep the information on disc and print it out neatly on A4 paper. It can be made to fit your own specifications, and a site licence is available.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Dead easy to use - takes five minutes to learn
- ▲ Mark sheets can be inserted into LocoScript
- ▲ Good on screen help
- ▲ Averages worked out for you
- ▼ Underpowered and slow
- ▼ Expensive for what it is

LANGUAGE TUTORS

£19.95 each • Kosmos Software • 05255 3942/5406

Four programs with identical formats to help you learn French, Italian, Spanish and German. They can be used just as effectively by students of those languages learning English too. Very versatile series of programs and useful adjuncts to conventional language learning.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Can edit the lessons yourself to include new words
- ▲ Useful self test option
- ▲ Completely bilingual packages
- ▼ Purely for vocabulary learning no grammar lessons
- ▼ Would have been more useful if they had also included audio cassettes

MATHS MANIA

£16.95 • School Software Ltd • 010 353 61 45399

For children between the ages of 8 and 12, this program offers 5 levels of difficulty in multiplication and 2 in division. A very good program for exercising basic numeracy skills and for practising some mental arithmetic.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Program provides a chirpy feedback on the score of the user
- ▲ Large attractive numbers appear on the screen
- ▼ Surprisingly enough, no addition or subtraction exercises are provided
- ▼ Screens could be made more visually exciting for the younger users

BETTER MATHS

£16.95 • School Software Ltd • 010 353 61 45399

A continuation of Maths Mania for the next age group 12 to 16 year olds. Topics are very varied and cover, among others, statistics, simple interest and algebra. Each topic consists of a series of ten multiple choice questions. At the end of each set, the percentage scored is shown.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Realistic level of difficulty practised
- ▲ Program makes a first class revision aid

FUN SCHOOL 3

£24.99 • Database Software • 0625 859333

A disc for the under-5s. Fun School 3 comprises six games which aim to improve the basics of early education - counting, matching and recognising letters, and so on. The main character is a teddy bear, and his rewards for your good work means that he gains a new house, eats ice cream and fills the coffers of his piggy bank.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Program has excellent and delightful graphics
- ▲ The basic ideas are original
- ▲ It is of genuine educational value
- ▼ The disc is rather slow to load

JUNIOR PLAYTIME

£9.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 636475

A set of ten educational games for the four to eight-year-old range. Not school work brought home and made fun, though this is more a test of general ability than general knowledge. Games include matching pairs of words, guessing numbers and a Maze puzzle.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Plenty of games to choose from
- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Can "edit" certain parts of the package
- ▲ Includes a score sheet option
- ▲ The graphics are excellent
- ▼ Some games possibly more fun than educational
- ▼ No documentation

SCHOOL'S OUT

£9.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 636475

Not so much "out" as nowhere to be seen. The sequel to Junior Playtime, aimed at sevens to十四岁, the five games on this disc are definitely more games than "tests". But they do include some of the intellectual "greats", such as Reversi, (Othello), Hangman and Four in a Row (Connect 4), which will stimulate thought and reasoning rather than simple reaction.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Good selection of games
- ▲ Four or five difficulty levels for each game
- ▲ Good use of graphics
- ▲ Challenging and fun
- ▼ Documentation is on the disc rather than hard copy...
- ▼ ...and is not very clear anyway

YES CHANCELLOR!

£17.35 + VAT • Topologica • 0733 244682

Wait! Don't skip over Yes Chancellor! because it calls itself an "economic simulation" program. Instructive and fun to use, you type in your annual budgets (tax rates, public spending, etc.) and see your popularity plummet and the economy crash. Great for economics classes, also an amusing game in itself.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Simple but effective model of the economy
- ▲ Comes with booklet explaining economic principles
- ▲ Great for teaching economic and political pragmatism
- ▼ Can get boring as a game
- ▼ You can't adjust the model of the economy, so it can be too simple

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications is one of the glittering areas of computing, gurus would have you believe. It can provide a fascinating hobby for 'buffs', but more importantly it is a valuable business tool.

'Electronic mail' is just what it says: you use your PCW to send messages, which can be documents thousands of words long, to others on the electronic mail system. The best known system of this kind is Telecom Gold, which also allows you to send telexes. Another major system is Prestel, which is more of an information provider - you can read share prices, weather information and other news direct from your phone line.

For any professional service, you pay a registration fee, plus a connection charge - typically around 10p per minute you use the system. Of course, your phone bills are extra. For hobbyists there are also 'Bulletin boards', which are effectively a kind of private electronic mail system run by a system operator (a 'sysop' to those in the know).

To use any service, you will need to buy a modem and an interface. A modem allows you to send computer signals down a phone line, and the interface gets the signals from your PCW to your modem. The pair will set you back £200 or more. Once done, you need some software to allow you to send and receive data, and it is this software reviewed below.

Electronic mail services just send strings of characters to and fro, whereas Prestel is a 'Viewdata' system, meaning it sends pictures and graphics too. Software needs to do more to receive Viewdata graphics, so if you want to use Prestel make sure your software is up to it.

8256UKM7.COM

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P.D. software documentation is often poor but this program has an above average document file. UKM7 was written to support ASCII file transfers using error correction and as a dumb terminal either for use over the phone or between two Amstrads. Between two PCW's file transfer is possible at a staggering 31,250 baud which is even faster than PIP! Easy to use for beginners and better than KERMIT, UKM7 provides a cheap and excellent way to communications after you've got fed up with the PCW's MAIL232. 8256UKM7 is available from the Public Domain Special Interest Group, or most bulletin boards supporting the PCW machines.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Cheap! (the price of a phone call)
- ▲ Easy to use, and helpful menus
- ▼ Modem7 version of Xmodem error checking supported
- ▼ Single file and Batch Mode transfers
- ▼ "Quiet" mode for slightly faster transfers (on-line transfer progress report disabled)
- ▼ Only ASCII, no Viewdata
- ▼ You need to find a PD software source (eg. use a modem and MAIL232 software)

MINI OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

£39.95 • Database Software • 0625 859333

The comms package is as comprehensive as anything else on the market. It can display both ordinary text screens and the 'Viewdata' block graphics used by Prestel. You are offered baud rates from 75 to 9600, separately set for transmit and receive, straight terminal emulation for use with Telecom Gold, and XMODEM and KERMIT file transfer protocols for error-proof transfer of long files. Would be well worth the money just by itself – and of course you're getting four other very good programs as well.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Very comprehensive – a genuinely useful comms package
- ▲ Ordinary text and 'Viewdata' block graphics
- ▲ Can save setups under names and recall them, so you only need work out your baud rates/parties once
- ▲ You can set keys to return strings, such as Telecom Gold passwords
- ▲ Comes preconfigured to use Prestel and Telecom Gold

CHITCHAT E-MAIL/VIEWDATA/COMBO

Sagesoft • £69.99/£69.99/£99.99 • 091 284 7077

Two communications programs for the 8000 series machines that have been around for a good time now. Most of the features you will need are here: message text editor, preprogramming unattended tasks (if you use a suitable "intelligent" modem), directory of stored numbers, copy to printer, and a very useful connect time clock so you can watch your phone bill climb! E-mail is used for simple text phone links like Telecom Gold, whereas you'll need Viewdata if you want to use Prestel. The Combo pack contains both E-mail and Viewdata.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Good, clear documentation
- ▲ Easy for first timers to use
- ▲ Built in text editor for pre-sending message preparation
- ▲ Pre-definable tasks executable at any preset time if unattended.
- ▼ No error corrected file transfer (i.e. Xmodem or CRC)

DIALUP

£72.40 • PMS Communications • 021-643 7688

Offers both E-mail and Viewdata operations. Very easy to use, and offers an XMODEM transfer protocol unlike Sage ChitChat. If you are buying a modem too there are some cut-price bundled deals to be had, eg. the Miracle Technology WS4000 modem.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Simple to use
- ▲ Comprehensive file transfer commands, including XMODEM and the increasingly popular KERMIT
- ▲ Runs from the M drive
- ▼ Manual is not PCW specific, and the references to 5.25" discs are tedious

PROGRAMMING

Programming languages come as either 'compilers' or 'interpreters' – compilers pre process the program into machine code, so are much faster. The PCW's standard Mallard BASIC and LOGO are both

interpreters. Compilers are generally more cumbersome

to use than interpreters, but have various benefits for serious programmers.

If you use a specialised programming language and have any comments that would help us compile a good software file entry for it, we would be pleased to hear from you.

BASIC NEEDS

£9.95 (£5 to RNLI) • Luxylan Software •

0726 850820

A BASIC bundle for programming buffs, which requires a small amount of foreknowledge to operate. Consists of five files that can be run under Mallard BASIC, including FRED, the FriendlyText Editor, which is an extremely agile and versatile file editor and program editor. Basic Needs is excellent value for money.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Uses of LocoScript keys
- ▲ Easy to use
- ▲ Loads of features
- ▼ Documentation poor

HISOFT C

£49.95 • HiSoft • 0525 718181

A very good C compiler, fast, produces good compact code. It comes complete with the HiSoft integrated text editor ED80.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Compiles program into ordinary CPM .COM file
- ▲ Produces compact code
- ▲ Fast and inexpensive
- ▲ Comes with integrated text editor
- ▼ No floating point arithmetic

ARNOR C

£49.95 • Arnor • 0733 68909

Good compiler with floating point arithmetic, but not as fast or as cheap as HiSoft C.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Excellent integrated text editor
- ▲ Floating point arithmetic
- ▼ Cumbersome to produce .COM files, needs special run time support program
- ▼ HiSoft C is faster and cheaper

MIX C

£33.95 • Advantage • 0242 224340

American C compiler. A fuller package, including text editor, graphics and tutorial comes at £49.95. Also machine code assembler and examples, available separately for £8.95 each.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Features an excellent C tutorial
- ▲ Comprehensive implementation and massive manual
- ▼ Not for the newcomer to programming

PASCAL 80

£49.95 • Hisoft • 0525 718181

A standard full Pascal compiler that produces compact code. Comes with the ED80 text editor and a stand alone programmers editor.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Well integrated text editor – when you hit a compilation error you are returned to the correct point to edit it
- ▲ Short compilation time, economical on memory
- ▼ Manual makes no attempt to teach you Pascal

HISOFT FORTH

£19.95 • Hisoft • 0525 718181

Forth is an unusual language, somewhere between assembler and C. This is one of the few compilers available for the PCW.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Comes with a Forth editor
- ▲ Quick and efficient implementation
- ▼ Manual doesn't teach you Forth

THE VICAR

£29.95 • Iansyst • 071-607 5844

A programming tool for serious programmers. If you have a several-hundred line program held in several files on a disc, you can lose track of which variables are used where. The VICAR produces a concordance listing and other diagnostics, to help you find bugs and maintain the program.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Easy to use but still flexible through use of options
- ▲ Amstrad versions all at a special low price
- ▲ Good manual
- ▼ Only of value on large programs
- ▼ Limited value to most PCW users (except BASIC buffs)

ALL YOU EVER ...

£29.95 • CP Software • 0993 823463

Program is ridiculously entitled All You Ever Wanted To Know About Graphics, the Universe and Everything on the PCW 8256/8512 but were Afraid to Ask. It's for the experienced programmer who needs fast, smoothly flowing and professional looking graphics output. It has a library of machine code routines which you can use in any language from Mallard Basic to machine code.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ You can produce professional standard graphics
- ▲ Demo programs included on the disc
- ▲ Routines are very wide ranging
- ▲ Excellent value for money
- ▲ New routines of latest version concerned with printer control
- ▼ Not recommended for beginners
- ▼ Cumbersome to use from Basic

DEVPAC 80 MKII

£49.95 Hisoft 0525 718181

Version 2 of the PCW hacker's first choice of development system. Substantially upgraded from the original with a new quite powerful debugger, and a Mini Officestyle main menu from which to run the individual utilities or your own finished programs.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Powerful assembler producing REL or COM files
- ▲ Good hex facility for Basic programmers
- ▼ Text editor antiquated and clumsy
- ▼ Weak monitor

MAXAM II

£49.95 • Arnor • 0733 68909

C/PM machine code development system incorporating an editor, assembler and monitor. It will allow you to disassemble any of the memory banks including extra memory on M drive.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Very versatile assembly language programming environment
- ▲ Flexible monitor capable of bank switching, conditional breakpoints and symbolic debugging
- ▲ Tailored to meet all CP/M Plus programming requirements
- ▲ Program can't cope with some undocumented Z80 instructions
- ▲ Program assumes basic familiarity with the Z80 assembly language

MODULA 2

£54.95 Hisoft • 0525 718181

A compiler. Modula-2 is the successor to Pascal, good for large programs requiring separate compilation, complete with text editor.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Full implementation with extensions.
- ▲ Includes libraries of predefined modules
- ▲ WordStar type screen editor included
- ▼ Compilation process is longwinded and not for beginners

NEXT MONTH

The guide continues with the categories of SPREADSHEETS, GRAPHICS and GAMES.

The month after will cover WORD PROCESSORS, ACCOUNTS, UTILITIES and DTP, and the month after that it's back to this month's topics. Our intention is to keep publishing the three parts of the guide in rotation, updating it each month to include all new products. If you would like to see other sections of the guide, back issues of 8000 Plus are available at £1.75 each. Meanwhile, if you are aware of any significant errors or omissions in the file as published, please let us know. We intend to maintain it as THE authoritative guide to PCW software, thereby keeping you thoroughly up to date with the latest software.

Arnor's 1991 PCW Software Sale

PROTEXT ... The Word Processor

Protext is firmly established as the alternative to Locoscript.

All the features you would expect from a good word processor - many text editing commands, print commands, spell checking and mail-merging. The refinement and thought that has been put into the program - logical keystrokes and commands, clear layout, speed and power ... all go towards making Protext ideal for the novice or the experienced user.

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* Compatible with PCW 9512 * Enhanced spelling checker - larger dictionaries, dictionary on drive M or on program disc * Many improvements based on customer feedback *

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"The great strength of this package is its ease of use" CWTA

"Protext is the solution to all Locoscript's drawbacks" PCW

"Makes Locoscript look like a snail" 8000 PLUS

"Simply the best word processing program to date for the PCW ... Locoscript is effectively dead" PUTTING YOUR AMSTRAD TO WORK

Protext is also available in German at £59.95 (Prowort)

... The Book

This is an independently produced book about Protext, written by Rob Ainsley.

The book features a large section of tips for easy reference and is well illustrated with screen shots and printouts.

It also includes a section written to help the Locoscript user to 'convert' quickly to Protext.

It is an essential purchase for any current or potential Protext user whatever their word processing experience.

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CP/M languages and PC Protext

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"Maxam II - now the best gets even better" CWTA CPC

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C

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Tipoffs

Five whole pages of crucial PCW advice!

Find LocoScript testing? Is CP/M rather a trial? BASIC posing problems? June may be the exam season, but if you've got the questions, Tipoffs has the answers. Examine the following pages: you'll find invaluable crib notes in LocoScript, LocoMail, LocoFile, MasterFile, BASIC, Micro Design and every other popular subject. A degree above the others this month is John Eade for his calculator in LocoScript that should help everyone with their arithmetic.

If you've found a way round a poser in any popular program, write and tell us. You could win hard cash! Write to:

Tipoffs, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2XF. It's Freepost.

Hey Mac



The Apple Macintosh - the most popular computer for typesetting and graphics work - can easily work with text prepared in LocoScript on your PCW

In April's issue a reader wrote about the difficulty in sending files from a PCW to an Apple Macintosh, and thanked Moonstone and the Glasgow Apple Centre for their help - without giving the solution! Well, here it is.

Start by getting a 3.5" internal or external drive for the PCW and Moonstone's 2in1 program.

2in1 has the facility to format your 3.5" discs. If you want to talk to the Mac, don't use it. Instead, start at the other end and format the disc on the Mac first, using "Apple File Exchange" which comes with most Macs. (The Mac word for "format" is "initialise".) A disc formatted this way round, as a 720K MS-DOS disc, will then be recognised by 2in1.

If you pick one of the 3.5" x 2Mb discs that big Macs normally work with you'll have another problem: the Mac will only offer you the option of formatting it at 1440K, which won't read at the PCW end. There are two solutions to this. First, sticky tape - on the bottom right corner of the Apple there is a square hole through this

helps the Mac recognise the disc as 2Mb. If you tape it over, Apple File Exchange will let you format it at 720K. The second answer is to buy standard 720K discs. Moonstone recommend this option.

To summarise the subsequent exchange procedure taking a LocoScript file from PCW with 3.5" drive to a Mac:

1. In LocoScript, convert the file to ASCII. Do this in the disc manager: press [f7] (or [f1] in LocoScript 2) and select 'Make ASCII file' choosing the 'simple text' option and putting the result in group 0 of the disc.
2. Run 2in1 as usual and send the file to the 3.5" disc you previously formatted in the Mac.
3. Carry the disc over to the Mac. Start "Apple File Transfer", put in the disc, and transfer the file to the Macintosh's hard disc.
4. On the Mac open a word processing document and bring the file into it. You can now read your text again.

Andy Tribble, AGA Advertising, London

MD Doctor

A few tips for Micro Design 2 users.

* You don't have to load and re-save .CUT, .MDA or .MDF files in Micro Design to copy them from disc to disc. Use the LocoScript disc manager to copy, erase etc. instead. When erasing a Micro Design file, be sure to erase the limbo file as well.

* When writing text in LocoScript to be used in Micro Design, end the name with .TXT - then Micro Design will recognise it as a text file quicker.

* You can use LocoScript 1 to write text for use in Micro Design. Write the document as normal, then in the disc manager convert it to an ASCII file whose name ends in .TXT using [f7] 'Modes' ('simple text' option). Use this file in Micro Design.

* If you experience difficulty with continuous paper, such as when you print out a banner in SIDEWAYS mode with one giant letter to a page, it may be because Micro Design thinks of continuous paper as being A4 size (70 lines) instead of normal 11 inch continuous paper (66 lines). This means each page gets out of step with the perforations. To get round this, here's what to do.

1. Switch the PCW on and insert your CP/M (copy) disc.

2. At the A> type paper c d [RETURN]. Some figures appear.

3. When the A> returns, insert the Micro Design disc and then type md followed by [RETURN].

4. In the Micro Design menu choose paper as 'continuous', form feed 'on' and length 'page'. Now when printing each page should begin at the right place. This process can be used to print disc labels. Replace the command in step 2 by the line paper c f118 d [RETURN]. The disc label blanks can be had from PCW World.

* Printing sideways goes from right to left. For a banner saying WELCOME, if you used the print queue to do each letter to a page as above, you'd have to enter it so the pages would be printed in the order EMOCLEW.

Stuart Teale, Wakefield, Yorks

Continuous problems

When I print a document each page prints nearer the top each time on continuous paper until it hits the perforation between the sheets.

D Walker, Glasgow

8000 Plus: Make sure you're set up for continuous paper. Before you print a document, press [PTR] in the disc manager. Then: LocoScript 1 Press [f1], 'Options'. Using cursors and the [+/-] key, tick the 'continuous' option and make the 'form length' 66.

LocoScript 2 Press [f3] 'Paper'. Using cursors and [+/-], tick the '11" fanfold' option. Either way, now [ENTER] and [EXIT] back to the disc manager and print the document. (If queried in LocoScript 2, use 'current paper'.) It should print perfectly spaced on the continuous paper.

Reverse gear

Is there a way to print reversed-out text (white letters in black background) in LocoScript, as you can in Mini Office? J Taylor, Leicester 8000 Plus: No.

Length count

Protex treats every piece of paper I print in single-sheet mode as being A4. It stops printing at the bottom of the page all right, but the printer keeps winding on afterwards as if the page were A4. It is very annoying having to wait for this. What can I do? M Watkins, Salford, Lancs

8000 Plus: The solution is easy. Suppose each piece of paper has 15 lines; then include the following lines at the top of the document:

>pl 15
(blank line)
>oc 27,67,15
...followed by the stored commands for layout etc. This tells the printer to treat every single sheet as if it were 15 lines long. If you want a different number, alter the 15 in the 'oc' command to whatever you require

Listing list

BASIC programmers may be interested to know that there is a book with just BASIC listings in it. "The Amstrad Companion" by David Laurence and Mark England is published by Sunshine Books. It includes useful items on GSX, pie charts, graphs and Logo. H Loosemore, East Ham, London

The mad count
Is there a quick way in LocoScript of counting words in a document? I know you get a word count after running LocoSpell, but it's very tedious having to do a spell check every time you want to do a simple word count. I have to write material holiday brochure to very specific word counts, and it can often a dozen edits before I get the word count right.

R Smith, London W4
8000 Plus: If I had a lira for each time I've been asked this question, I'd be able to buy a stamp now. The answer, I'm afraid, is no. There are some BASIC routines that will do it listed in the 8000 Plus Tips

Collection book currently on offer in our mail order pages; this is about the best option. Another option is to buy Ansible Index, advertised in 8000 Plus; its main function is to produce indexes but it also has a word-count feature.

Insert here

When editing record entries in Masterfile, the usual mode is 'overwrite'. If you prefer to work in 'insert' mode (à la LocoScript) press the up cursor. An up arrow appears in a box to the left of the text and you are in insert mode.

M Godwin, Yate, Bristol

Clear thinking

Is there a quick way to clear the PCW's screen in CP/M?

S de Nimes, Bath, Avon
8000 Plus: Yes. Just type [EXIT]e [EXIT]h [RETURN].

Modem times



A typical modem, the device that can put you and your PCW in touch with the outside world. However, you'll need to invest in an interface and the necessary software to make a start!

I keep reading things about modems. What is a modem and which are the best ones to buy?

David Imlach, Stranraer

8000 Plus: Basically a modem is a device that links your computer to the phone lines, enabling it to talk to other

modem-fitted computers around the world - computer communications, or 'comms'. It enables you to do things like access information services and transfer the information directly onto disc (rather handier than visiting the library, writing notes and then typing

them up), do home banking (transfers, payments etc) by accessing your bank's computer (only a few banks do this), book holidays, and get software from software libraries round the world 'downloaded' onto disc down the phone line for the price of a phone call.

It all sounds great, but here are the drawbacks. To access any of these with a PCW, you need an RS232 interface (£60 or so from mail order advertisers in 8000 Plus) some comms software (Mini Office has a good comms program on it and is £30 or less mail order) and a modem (the Amstrad SM2400 is highly rated).

Many information services charge fees for use: consulting Prestel for example will cost you so much per year in subscription and then an extra charge per minute - plus the cost of your phone calls. Also, few services are set up to cope with the PCW; graphics will not work and there are far fewer software libraries that you can get software from.

I must confess that all this has put me off; I've never thought comms worth it. However, quite a few people do.

Make a pass

I want to be able to get hold of a short BASIC program which requires a password before the program will run, and I want it to show asterisks instead of the password entered so that no-one watching can make a note of the correct password when it is being typed. Is there any such program available commercially, or could you show me how it's done here?

R Walker, Helston, Cornwall

8000 Plus: No problem. This routine illustrates how you can do this, with the password 'Fred':

```
10 PRINT "Type password"
20 tries% = 0
30 password$ = "" : FOR j% = 1 TO 4 :
password$ = password$ + INPUT$(1)
: PRINT "*"; : NEXT
40 PRINT : IF UPPER$(password$) = "FRED" THEN GOTO 100
50 tries% = tries% + 1
60 IF tries% < 3 THEN PRINT "Wrong.
Try again." : GOTO 30
70 PRINT "Sorry. Program aborted."
80 OUT 248,11
100 PRINT "Correct" : REM program
continues...
```

This routine is fairly flexible, in that it gives the user three chances to get it right. The passwords they type are not displayed on screen and they don't press [RETURN] at the end - BASIC just takes whatever four letters they type as the password. (If the password has, for example, five letters, change the 4 in line 30 to 5.) If the user gets it wrong three times, line 80 sounds the burglar alarm - try it. (To turn it off, just type OUT 248,12 [RETURN] - a useful thing to know once the alarm has gone off, as I'm sure you'll appreciate.)

Case - or use of capital and small letters - doesn't matter - so that 'FRED', 'fred' or 'fReD' will all work to the same effect.

There's not much point having a password like this unless you protect the listing to stop people listing it themselves and looking for a line like 40 that tells them what the secret password is!

To protect your listing, save it by typing
save "program.bas",p [RETURN].
Then it can't be LISTed, LLISTed or EDITed.

```
list
10 PRINT "Type password"
20 tries% = 0
30 password$ = "" : FOR j% = 1 TO 4 :
password$ = password$ + INPUT$(1)
: PRINT "*"; : NEXT
40 PRINT : IF UPPER$(password$) = "FRED" THEN GOTO 100
50 tries% = tries% + 1
60 IF tries% < 3 THEN PRINT "Wrong. Try again." : GOTO 30
70 PRINT "Sorry. Program aborted."
80 OUT 248,11
100 PRINT "Correct"
```

Now your darkest secrets can be password protected in BASIC - and you can even ensure the maximum of security with it's built in burglar alarm!

Condensed plot

April's Tipoffs ("Condensed plot") offered a way of setting the printer to print out in condensed text - very useful for wide BASIC listings, for example. However, here's a quicker way.

At the A> simply type [ALT]p [ALT]o [ENTER] [ALT]p. The first [ALT]p tells the printer to expect a message; the [ALT]o represents the code 15 to set condensed pitch; the second [ALT]p tells the printer to go back to sleep.

In a similar way, you can set the following styles. It doesn't matter whether you type upper case (ABC) or lower case (abc).

Elite: [ALT]p [EXIT] m [ENTER] [ALT]p
Enlarged: [ALT]p [EXIT] w1 [ENTER] [ALT]p
Italic on: [ALT]p [EXIT] 4 [ENTER] [ALT]p
Italic off: [ALT]p [EXIT] 5 [ENTER] [ALT]p
Bold on: [ALT]p [EXIT] e [ENTER] [ALT]p
Bold off: [ALT]p [EXIT] f [ENTER] [ALT]p
Underline on: [ALT]p [EXIT] -1 [ENTER] [ALT]p
Underline off: [ALT]p [EXIT] -0 [ENTER] [ALT]p
Superscript: [ALT]p [EXIT] s0 [ENTER] [ALT]p
Subscript: [ALT]p [EXIT] s1 [ENTER] [ALT]p
Cancel super- or subscript: [ALT]p [EXIT] t [ENTER] [ALT]p
Reset printer to usual state: [ALT]p [EXIT]@ [ENTER] [ALT]p
These all come in very handy.

Alan Sloan, Sheffield, Fulwood

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MICROSNIPS

Centre stage

There are many applications where a page full of centred lines looks very smart - handbills, menus or notices, for example. One way of doing it is to enter [+c] (or [+ce] in LocoScript 1) before each line, but it can be tedious. Here is a better way.

At the top of the document press [f2] selecting 'change layout' or 'brand new layout'. Then, once in the layout editing screen:

LocoScript 1 Press the down cursor. Move the cursor to the centre of the ruler line, halfway between the two margins. Press [f5] to set a centre tab. Delete any other tab markers by putting the cursor over them and pressing [-]. [EXIT] back to the main document.

LocoScript 2 Press [f3] and 'clear all tabs'. Move the cursor to the centre of the ruler line, halfway between the two margins. Press [+] three times to set a centre tab (signified by a twin-headed arrow). [EXIT] back to the main document.

Now type in each line against the left margin as normal, ending each with

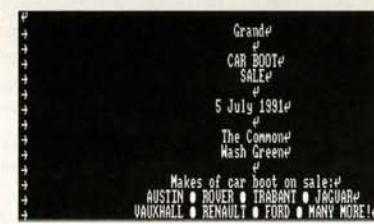


Once you've set up the right layout, you can type lines in to LocoScript as normal, do a quick [EXCH]...

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...and the printed result comes out perfectly centred.



...and in a jiffy each line is centred. Very smart for handbills, menus and posters...

[RETURN]. When you want to centre the lot, just go back to the top of the document and press [EXCH] ([SHIFT] [FIND]). Give [RETURN] as the text to 'find' and [RETURN] [TAB] as the text to 'exch'. Cursor down and select 'automatic exchange'. Press [ENTER] and the whole page is centred for you.

If you copy this document, calling the copy TEMPLATE.STD and removing all the text from it, then any new document you set up will have the right layout for centring already, and you only have to follow the steps in the above paragraph to centre everything.

Key facts in LocoScript

I've just discovered the trick everyone else probably knows of pressing [+j] to set italics instead of going through the menus. Can you publish a complete list of these tricks?

J Dee, Hornchurch, Essex

8000 Plus: You don't ask for much, do you! In the following, keystrokes marked * only apply to LocoScript 1; those marked ** only apply to LocoScript 2. You can use upper or lower case, i.e. either [+j] or [+J] will set italics.

While editing a document

[+] B selects bold; [-] B deselects it
[+] I selects italic; [-] I deselects it
[+] UL selects continuous underline; [-] UL deselects it
[+] W selects word-underline; [-] UL deselects it

[+] SB selects subscript; [-] SB deselects it
[+] SR selects superscript; [-] SB deselects it

[+] P 17 [ENTER] selects 17 pitch (17 letters per inch)

[+] P 15 [ENTER] selects 15 pitch (15 letters per inch)

[+] P PS [ENTER] selects proportional pitch (c. 13 letters per inch)

[+] P 12 [ENTER] selects 12 pitch (12 letters per inch)

[+] P 10 [ENTER] selects 10 pitch (10 letters per inch)

[+] P 17 D [ENTER] selects 8 1/2 pitch (8 1/2 letters per inch)

[+] P 15 D [ENTER] selects 7 1/2 pitch (7 1/2 letters per inch)

[+] P PS D [ENTER] selects double proportional pitch (c. 6 1/2 letters per inch)

[+] P 12 D [ENTER] selects 6 pitch (6 letters per inch)

[+] P 10 D [ENTER] selects 5 pitch (5 letters per inch)

[+] [SPACE] gives a hard space

[+] [SPACE] gives a soft space

[+] - gives a hard hyphen

[+] - gives a soft hyphen

[+] C centres the line*

[+] CE centres the line**

[+] RJ aligns the text against the right margin*

[+] RA aligns the text against the right margin**

[+] J justifies the text (smooth right margin)**

[+] J stops justification (ragged right margin)**

[+] LS 0 [ENTER] selects zero line spacing (overprinting lines)

[+] LS 1/2 [ENTER] selects half line spacing

[+] LS 1 [ENTER] selects single line spacing

[+] LS 1 1/2 [ENTER] selects single one and a half line spacing

[+] LS 2 [ENTER] selects double line spacing

[+] LS 2 1/2 [ENTER] selects two and a half line spacing

[+] LS 3 [ENTER] selects triple line spacing

[+] LS returns to line spacing set for document

[+] LP 5 [ENTER] sets 5 lines per inch**

[+] LP 6 [ENTER] sets 6 lines per inch

[+] LP 7 1/2 [ENTER] sets 7 1/2 lines per inch**

[+] LP 8 [ENTER] sets 8 lines per inch

[+] LP returns to line pitch set for the

document

[+] KP 3 [ENTER] keeps the next three lines (including this one) together and won't split them over a page break etc. (any positive whole number can be entered)

[+] KP 3 [ENTER] keeps the previous three lines (including this one) together and won't split them over a page break etc. (any positive whole number can be entered)

[+] CR 1/2 [ENTER] inserts an extra half-line between paragraphs**

[+] CR 1 [ENTER] inserts an extra line between paragraphs**

[+] CR 1 1/2 [ENTER] inserts an extra one and a half lines between paragraphs**

[+] CR 0 [ENTER] or [-] CR cancels the extra half lines**

[+] RV reverses the colour of the following text but has no effect on printout

[+] RV returns to normal colour

[+] SC in a text marks this word as being correctly spelt; LocoSpell will ignore it

[+] PN== will when printed insert the current page number in a space three characters wide and centred in this space

[+] PN>> does the same with the number aligned against the right edge of the space

[+] PN<< does the same with the number aligned against the left edge of the space

(similarly = etc. does the same for one space, == etc. for two and so on)

[+] LPN== will when printed

BASIC bits

1. How do you stop a BASIC listing running?
2. How do you quit BASIC and go back to CP/M?

Andy Tribble, AGA Advertising, London

8000 Plus: 1. Press [STOP] to stop it, or [f5] to halt the running temporarily; [f3] resumes operation. Some programs are designed so this won't work, in which case all you can do is switch off.

2. Type system [RETURN] and the A> will reappear.

Boot up

Moonstone's 2in1 program, which enables the PCW to format discs in a 3 1/2" drive for use in PCWs and PCs or Macs, can't format startup discs (as they admit in their manual). So, to make a self-booting startup disc for 2in1 using SUBMIT.COM in the usual way, first format a disc in DISKIT and then use 2in1 to mass-copy its own files to this disc plus the J...EMS file, SUBMIT.COM etc. Michael John Margetts, Blundellsands, Merseyside

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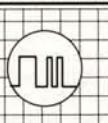
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insert the last page number of the document in a space three characters wide and centred in this space
 [+]**LPN>>** does the same with the number aligned against the right edge of the space
 [+]**LPN<<** does the same with the number aligned against the left edge of the space
 (similarly = etc. does the same for one space, == etc. for two and so on)

[+]**LT 3** selects layout number 3 etc. (any reasonable number can be entered)
 [-]**LT** returns to the default layout for the document*

[+]**LL** makes this the last line on the page but does not end the paragraph (so e.g. will keep the line justified if this is selected)

[ALT] [RETURN] moves to a new page and ends the paragraph (so e.g. will not keep the line justified if this is selected)

In any menu
 Pressing [TAB] moves you to the next section (as marked by double lines).

When setting layouts in LocoScript 2
 [+]**sets a normal tab in the ruler line**

at that position

[+]**[+]** sets a right tab
 [+]**[+]** sets a centre tab
 [+]**[+]** sets a decimal tab
 [+]**[+]** sets a normal tab etc.
 [-]**clears a tab**
 [SPACE] moves to the right margin
 [+]**while on a margin moves one space to the right**
 [-]**while on a margin moves one space to the left**

In the disc manager

The following operations can be entered as fast as you like:

[f3] (move to destination group)
 [ENTER] (new name if any) [ENTER] copies the file you started on to the destination group*
 [f3] [ENTER] (move to destination group) [ENTER] (new name if any) [ENTER] copies the file you started on to the destination group**
 [f4] (move to destination group)
 [ENTER] (new name if any) [ENTER] moves the file you started on to the destination group*
 [f3] M [ENTER] (move to destination group) [ENTER] (new name if any) [ENTER] moves the file you started on

to the destination group**

[f6] [ENTER] erases the file you started on*
 [f3] E [ENTER] [ENTER] erases the file you started on**
 [f5] [ENTER] (new name) [ENTER] renames the file you started on with the name you type in*
 [f3] R [ENTER] (new name) [ENTER] renames the file you started on with the name you type in**

While LocoSpell is running

When the menu shows up for a doubtful word:

I [ENTER] Ignores the word
 A [ENTER] Adds the word to the user dictionary
 M [ENTER] Marks it as correct
 C [ENTER] lets you Consult the dictionary
 E [ENTER] lets you Edit the word
 U [ENTER] Uses the suggested replacement
 R [ENTER] Replaces the word letting you edit

Those are all the ones I can think of; they should provide you with enough material to experiment with - although there may well be many more!

Stick with it

If you want to print a message on a small sticky label that doesn't come on address label-style continuous backing paper - a disc label, perhaps - you have the problem of lining the text up on it. Here's a way round.

Take a length of backing paper from continuous address labels. Fold it back on itself with the less shiny side uppermost (so the printer can grip it). Insert this into the printer in the usual way and set up the desired text on screen. Print out the detail.

Remove the sheet and check the detail will fit on the label.

Stick the labels over the printed text so the text will fit on neatly centred or whatever. Replace the backing sheet in the printer. Print out again.

Lewis Gordon,

Wimbledon, London

Get SET

How can I protect my work in LocoScript and my CP/M database with a password from those I wish to keep out - such as my sister Emma!

Graham Wallis, Knaresborough, N Yorks

8000 Plus: First here's how to do it to any file that is used by a CP/M program (Mini Office, BASIC, Masterfile, SuperCalc etc etc) - but note this will not work for LocoScript files.

Suppose the file you want to protect is called **SECRET.DOC**. First switch on your PCW and insert the CP/M (copy) disc. At the A> type **pip m:=a:set.com** [RETURN]. If you get an error message try again with your CP/M master disc.

Now insert your disc with the file to be safeguarded. Decide a password for the file to be protected (say **BYEEMMA**). First type **m:set a:[protect=on]** [RETURN] which sets

From now on if you want to type the file to screen, copy it, erase it or edit it, you'll be asked for the password. (It isn't shown on screen when you type it in.) Get it wrong and the function is aborted.

To remove a password, type **m:set secret.doc [protect=none]**. You have to give the password before you do this! If you forget the password, copy the file in LocoScript - which doesn't recognise passwords - erasing the old one. The copy will have no password protection. So, even password protected files aren't totally safe from prying eyes!

The problem is that if you want to use the file in (say) Masterfile, BASIC etc., that they won't have anything to do with the file. So, you'll have to remove the password first before using it in your CP/M program, then re-set it afterwards.

You can easily protect your LocoScript files from casual snoops too. Rename them with **\$\$\$\$** at the end and they can't be edited

In LocoScript there's nothing you can do to password-protect a file. You can try temporarily renaming **SECRET.DOC** as **SECRET\$\$\$\$** using [f3] in the disc manager (or [f5] in LocoScript 1) and then LocoScript won't edit it, but of course you can easily rename it to **SECRET.DOC** again and it's editable.


 You can easily protect your CP/M files with a password. Unfortunately, using them once they're protected isn't quite that simple...

protection for the disc; now set the password for the file **SECRET.DOC** by typing **m:set secret.doc [password=byeemma]** [RETURN]. (To set all files on the disc to this password, type **m:set *.* [password=byeemma]** [RETURN].)

Continuous question

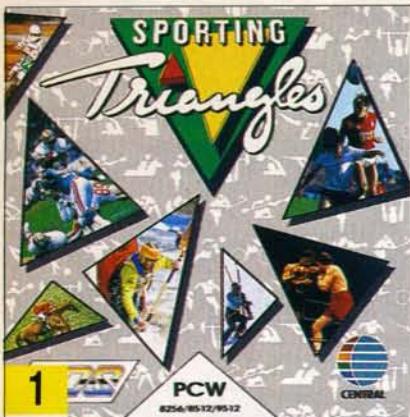
I use listing paper 99% of the time in CP/M. How can I get it to start off on listing paper when it starts up? I've tried typing paper c f66 g2 16 d [RETURN] to set the right parameters for continuous paper, but the D at the end - which is supposed to set the PCW to use these values by default - doesn't seem to work: every time I start up the PCW expects A4.

Tony Cooper, Pierrie, France

8000 Plus: The D parameter indeed makes the settings just selected those the printer will default to from then on - but only until the PCW is switched off; to make the PCW start up expecting to use continuous paper, you'd have to change the guts of that **.EMS** file that contains the instructions CP/M gives to the PCW when you start up. It's quite possible to do this using **SID.COM**, in theory, but it would be an involved process and if you don't know what you're doing you run the risk of doing some damage.

What you can do though is include that paper command in your **PROFILE.SUB** file. Then it'll come into action whenever you start up. For anyone who isn't sure how to do this, the steps are as follows:

1. Switch on the PCW and insert your CP/M copy disc.
2. Type **pip profile.sub=con**: [RETURN]
3. Type **paper c f66 g2 16 d** [RETURN] [ALT]z
4. When the A> appears, press [SHIFT] [EXTRA] [EXIT]. Your PCW should now start up and, when it prints, expect continuous paper.



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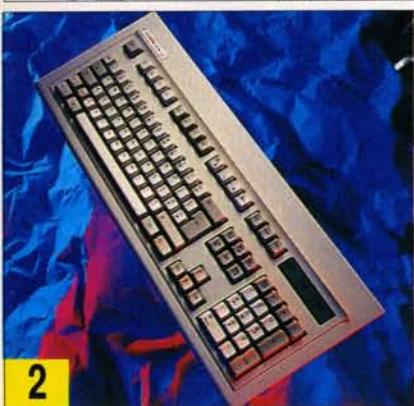
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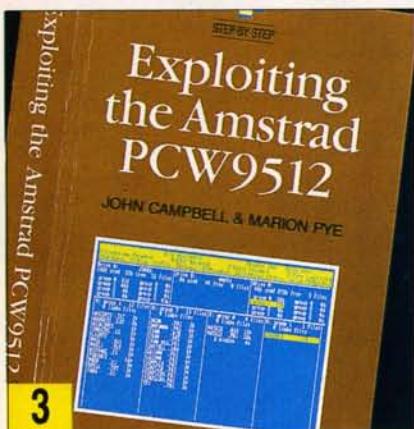
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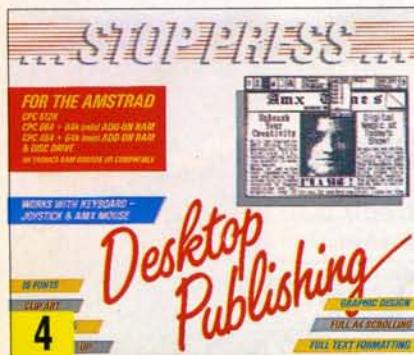
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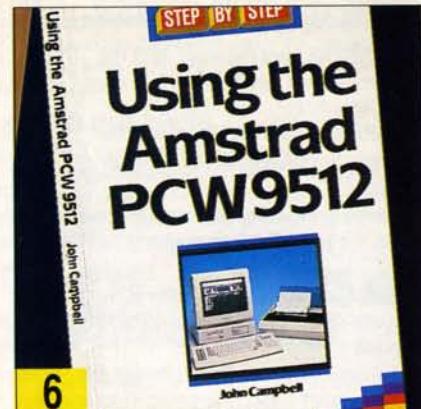
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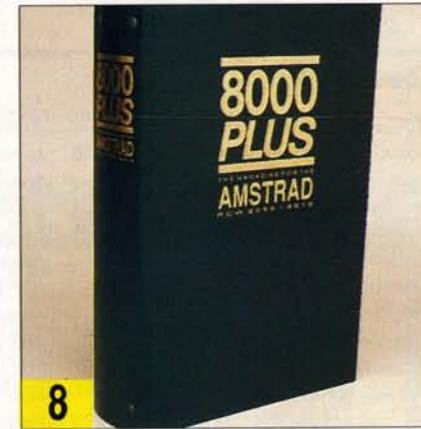


Using the Amstrad PCW9512

Using the Amstrad PCW9512
John Campbell



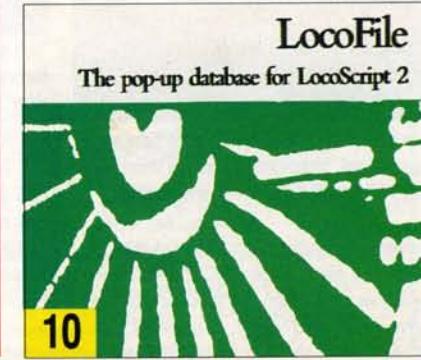
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8



9



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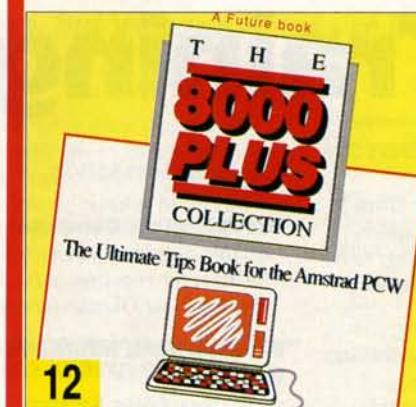
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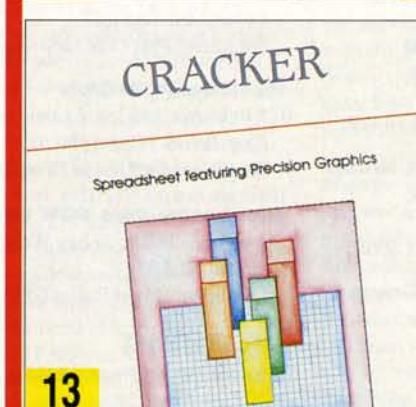
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Postscript

Welcome to June's Postscript, where the sun is always shining! We're fit to burst this month, with your help, enquiries, praise and general comments. Disc drives, printers, printer drivers, postcodes - you name it, it's all here. We've even heard from the owner of a bridge playing dog! Write to us with your opinions - the address is Postscript, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. We're sorry, but we cannot answer letters personally!

Innocent until..?

I am writing to you as one who genuinely believes himself to be honest, but who has just been shown in regrettable circumstances to have committed a criminal offence. I am the user of a MicroDesign2, and I purchased my copy of the programme legally. Content in the knowledge that I was a legitimate user I made copies of the programme to use on my own PCWs: my business owned three of these machines. Some time later, I changed machines, and on selling one of these machines naturally the disks went with it. A week later I received a call from the authors, Creative Technology, in which I learned that both these actions could easily have resulted in being prosecuted on charges of theft and breach of copyright.

I did vaguely understand that there are laws governing the copying and reselling of computer software: unfortunately, I also believed that I was an honest person who never stole anything in my life. I understand much more clearly now what software piracy really means, because I have been forced to explain to the people against whom I committed an unwitting theft why they should not prosecute me for it: it seems that my plea of ignorance about the law does not make me immune from such a prosecution. It cost me a substantial amount of money, and, I might add, some personal humiliation. I can only consider myself very lucky that it has not cost me more.

Creative Technology asked me to write this letter, partly to make every computer user search both their consciences and their disc boxes before declaring themselves beyond reproach, but also to say publicly that they do not intend to be so lenient in future. They assure me that anyone they catch indulging in a little 'honest' copying, whether to friends or for profit, will not be treated as gently as I have been. So to any users out there who think that they are beyond the law, I can only say this, be honest with yourself, and be warned. (Name and address supplied)

8000 Plus: We're quite sure that you aren't the only one to have been 'caught out' in this unfortunate way. The laws which govern this kind of happening are none too clear - let's hope that others will be more wary after reading this. Thank you for writing.

French connection

J. Stoessl's letter in the May issue probably voiced questions which may worry other people (and there are many!) who are contemplating moving to France. I have lived here for nearly 20 years, and can tell you the following:

1. My 8256 and 8512, both bought in England, work perfectly on the standard French voltage of 220v.
2. Buy your equipment before you leave England - middleman profit-margins here make hardware expensive.
3. I have not been able to discover any laws about IT information here which are not covered by international conventions on the subject. If you have a database consisting of names and addresses, every person on it has a right to inspect and correct the entry relating to him or her.
4. Buy English software. Much French software (particularly, of course, word processing software) insists on assuming that you have an AZERTI keyboard; if I boot LocoScript using a friend's disc, 'so?e very queer things happen'. LocoScript 1 supports all necessary accents for writing in French.

5. Keep up your subscription to 8000 Plus if you want to keep in touch - I am still looking for a PCW club in this country; Amstrad retailers seem quite unaware of such things as three and a half or five and a quarter disc drives for PCW's, and have a great tendency to look down their noses and say you are using horse-drawn equipment and should upgrade.

Tony Cooper
France

8000 Plus: Merci pour votre lettre, Tony! I'm sure the information you've provided will be of great help to potential inhabitants.

Screen solution

The cause of the screen dump problem being suffered by IM Charteris ('Dump Hump', Postscript, Issue 56) almost certainly lies in the power supply regulator of the PCW. I had similar problems myself when I first got my machine.

It appears that the power regulation circuitry of PCWs is a bit hit-and-miss, and they often come out of the factory with the voltages varying quite a bit from the ideal figures. At the worst case, there isn't enough power under certain conditions to supply all the demands.

Doing a screen dump of the disc manager screen is probably the strongest test, as the first thing to be printed is a mass of black and white lettering on it. This sudden heavy burst of printer activity takes too much power from the regulator, and robs other parts of the machine, which then crashes. The only way to rescue things in the short timer is to re-boot.

It can be cured - my machine showed the added fault of crashing on a hot day, as one Regulator component overheated - but I can't remember at this distance exactly what it was that needed replacing. In any case, it's not a job for the electronically squeamish, so perhaps Mr Charteris should refer the machine to a qualified engineer, with the above information as a pointer.

Graeme Aldous
Saltburn, Cleveland

8000 Plus: Very helpful, Graeme.

Colour find

Where can I get those brightly coloured discs which adorned the front cover of your May edition? Black ones are so dull. Secondly is it possible to put LocoScript into over-type rather than the default insert mode when typing in text. I keep seeing references to it but this elusive piece of information is not in the LocoScript manual.

N Hall
Harwich



8000 Plus: The discs on last month's cover were created lovingly by our colour co-ordinated art team - plus a few sprays of touch-up paint for cars from Halfords. Needless to say, the discs were rendered unusable after that little escapade, so I don't recommend that you try it at home! One way to brighten up those rather dull black discs could be to order some brightly coloured 8000 Plus labels from our Somerton office (0458 74011); they cost £1.00 for a pack of five. Now, on to LocoScript. Unfortunately it is not possible to overwrite text in this program. If you had Protext, you could do so by pressing [ALT][TAB] (and then reverse the effect with the same command sequence) but that isn't of much use to you, is it? Sorry about that, N.

Drive on

With reference to the article 'Crazy Driver' in your May issue. I am in complete agreement with Mr M Walker on this subject. The Print Driver disc by Locoscript contains print files for about 300 different printers to allow Locoscript to be printed. There will never be a time when I will use 98% of this information, which will have cost me in excess of £30. As Mr Walker points out, such is the state of the industry, that next week could be the launch of yet another model of printer, not included in the LocoScript disc, requiring yet another driver to print Locoscript. Does this mean yet another £30 for a few lines of programming? I will soon be purchasing a Canon Bubblejet. The print driver for this printer is included on the Micro Design 2 suite. If you have an early version of MD2, they will include it on your master disc free if you send it back. I can understand Locoscript would not want every user of their suit to send the master disc back to them for an update for free, but then why not do as Creative do and include a bigger range of print files on the master disc. After all, one print file does cover rather a large group of printers.

Mr T Morgan
Sevenoaks

8000 Plus: How do other readers feel?

Internal promotion

My PCW9512 is at present out of action due to a faulty disc drive that requires replacement. Since a replacement 3" disc drive is of the order of £120, plus fitting, I have been considering the possibility of replacing my 3" 'A' drive with a 3.5", such as the one advertised by 'Compact Micros' in your magazine at £79.95 + postage.

Can you tell me please, would this be likely to cause any problems, I don't mind if the unit is free standing instead of fitting into the 9512, but is it easy to connect? (I am an electronics technician, although I don't work on computers). I

would of course have to have the three inch discs copied onto three and a half inch, but are there likely to be any problems loading? Or any other difficulties with the software?

Having taken your excellent publication from the very first and being the proud possessor of the entire 8000 PLUS series - all nicely bound - I am sure you will accede to my request.

W Forsyth
Cambridge

8000 Plus: You won't be able to simply remove the 3" drive and replace it with a 3.5" version. You'll need to get your 3" drive repaired or buy a replacement one, whichever is the cheapest. Most suppliers of 3" drives provide pretty lucid instructions (Compact Micros certainly do), so you probably won't find it too hard to carry out. After that, you could go ahead and think about adding a 3.5" drive, but a straight swap is just not possible. Rather a shame, since this month's DIY maintenance feature is all about fitting the larger drive! Sorry!

Logo listing?

Please, 8000 Plus, would you be so kind as to print in your pages for me and all your other equally avid readers the DR LOGO listings for drawing:

- (a) a Sierpinski curve and
- (b) a Koch snowflake

David L J Warner
Winchester

8000 Plus: If anyone can provide the listings you seek, I feel sure that they'll pop them into an envelope marked Logo Listing and send them to me at the Bath address, from whence I shall forward them to you.

On the case?

Mr Dave Bailes of Stroud wrote in your Tipoffs section in February that "one good way of storing discs is in those clear plastic cases". Those must be the individual plastic cases in which the discs used to be supplied in the good old days of yore. The only discs which ran the risk of getting dusty were the ones in use. The others lay snugly in their little cases and so lasted ages.

But can you or he tell me, please, where one can buy those beautiful cases now. I have a dozen or more discs which have to live in communal cases, which is not nearly such a good storage method. I can now buy new discs with individual cases, but I want some cases for my older discs.

David Rudd
Banstead, Surrey

8000 Plus: And you shall have them, David; the cases are available from Advantage Software (56 Bath Road, Cheltenham, GL53 7HJ, telephone 0242 224340). They cost £2.95 for a box of ten, which can't be bad.

Protext preference

As a would-be owner of an Amstrad PCW, I have been reading your magazine so as to be familiar with its possibilities before taking the plunge.

It seems (Oct '90) that Protext would be more suitable than LocoScript for my purposes, as I would want to do essays and longer documents, also the word count would be very useful.

However, the PCW9512 normally comes with LocoScript, so if you want Protext instead of LocoScript, how is this achieved? The local dealer was not very helpful saying "everyone uses LocoScript", and I felt that I'd been asking a silly question! Please help!

Anne Henwood
Farnham, Surrey

8000 Plus: Ah, yet another shining example of the knowledge of the high street dealer! How uninspiring. The question is quite reasonable, but the answer is that you will have to buy Protext separately. LocoScript is bundled with the PCW, and there is no way to negotiate a swap with the dealer. Instead, you'll have to contact Protext's creators, Arnor, and part with £59.95 to obtain a program which, clearly, is more suited to your needs than LocoScript.

Travelling light

Following from your article about Scorecard in the May issue and taking a PCW to a cricket match, I wondered if it is safe to use a PCW without the printer attached as this would save transporting it. Unless you actually want to print out results right away, you could save to disc and print at home.

On another subject, I was very interested in the article in the April issue about Alan Dennis and his lighting controller and wondered if it is possible to get in touch with Alan to see if he would be prepared to sell details of his system. I would need both the program and circuit diagram of his black box.

D J Madge
Exminster, Devon

8000 Plus: As far as we know, it is perfectly safe to use a printer-less PCW - two out of the three 8000 Plus office PCWs are used in this fashion, with no adverse effects whatsoever.. On the subject of Alan Dennis, I have forwarded your letter to him.

Which is which?

I have an Amstrad PCW 8256 and would like to buy a really good printer to replace the PCW 8256.

Please could you recommend any printers which are fully compatible with the Word Processor and monitor. Quality of print (perhaps variety of type faces too) are what's important, be it laser, daisy-wheel or whatever. Do any need

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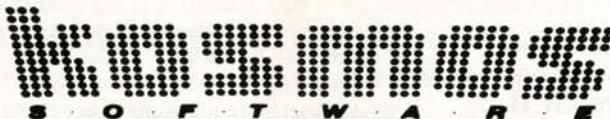
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special paper? Would another printer need to be fitted by a specialist?

Charles Pilling
Keswick

8000 Plus: This is one of those requests for help which comes up time and time again. So, you'll be pleased to hear that we'll be coming to your assistance in no small way with next month's feature on external printers. We'll be looking at a selection of the PCW compatible printers on the market, and answering all the most asked questions. If you can hold on until then, it will be well worth the wait!

Post de-code

Could you consider a guide to the various addresses you have? For example, on contents page, issue 53, we have:

'Future Pub... (Various Depts.) .. Bath BA1 2XF:

In issue 55 we have, Bath BA1 2BW
Tipoffs..Freepost Bath BA1 2XF
Postscript Bath BA1 2BW

Sophie's letter Bath BA1 2AP

Listings - No specific address

All appear to be at 30 Monmouth St., - Tipoffs are Freepost, the others are not: if I have (as on this occasion) letters for three different depts, can I assume they will be distributed or should they be each addressed separately?

R E Rushby
Cleethorpes

8000 Plus: OK, here we go, with the official 8000 Plus Good Postcode Guide. The address to use for all the categories you mention is 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 - and, wait for it - 2BW. As long as you put the correct section heading, plus the name of the magazine, then your missive will go to the right place. However, we've recently introduced a different address for competition entries, which is as follows: (Name of competition - so this month, it's DTP Competition) 8000 Plus, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP. And those are the only ones which apply to our Bath office. If you do put a different code, your correspondence will probably still get here, but the Post Office won't thank me for saying that!

A dogs life

Many moans in this computing world about poor service. Just to reverse the trend, a compliment to CDS Software. Bought their Colossus Bridge program - our puppy fancied the instruction booklet and ate it. Wrote to CDS - free copy sent by return. Trouble is, puppy is now too good for me at bridge.

N P Harris
Newton on Trent, Lincoln

8000 Plus: Does it follow that your bridge partners eat Pedigree chum, then?

Clean break I

Having successfully converted my PCW 8256 to 8512, installed a second drive and re-furbished the keyboard I assumed I was capable of following your instructions in the May issue on how to clean the 'A' series print head 'in six easy steps'.

I was wrong, stages, one, two, three and four easy but stage five presented a problem. Laying out the pins in the pattern as the illustration, I cleaned them and started to re-assemble only to find that there is more than one way to fit the pins.

Do the heads face in or out - should the pins be inserted in reverse order and which of the minute slots takes the first pin back, do they need to be inserted in reverse order?

The illustration at stage three doesn't help. Struggling to sort this out, I mixed up the pins! Is there any way they can be identified?

J N Palmer
Brundall, Norfolk

8000 Plus: Unfortunately, on the A series printer the order is vital. The answer is a matter of trial, error, and common sense. A few guidelines to help you, though: the tags at the top of the pins should point outwards, with each tag resting on a spoke of the 'wheel'. At the other end, each pin ends in a point. When these are inserted, they should form a straight line sticking out of the casing. This should help locate which side the pin goes on. Hope this helps you sort the problem out!

Clean break II

I followed your excellent instructions and cleaned the pins in the head on my 8256 printer. I also found that the irritating line on my printouts, that I have lived with for some time, was due to one arm on the steel ring that pulls the pins back going lazy. The line remains, despite my attempts to bend the offending spring arm. All I require is the pressed steel part (what you describe as the wheel). The part is unobtainable. Both my local computer shop and CPC Spares can only sell me a complete new print head at around £60. This is a ridiculous situation.

John Bennet
Wellingborough

8000 Plus: I agree. Can anyone help?

Guilty?

In Postscript in the April issue, PC Crisp enquires about the pattern of black and green lines that appeared on booting his PCW. It is probably all the fault of 8000 Plus - at least it was when my PCW was similarly affected. (Pray elaborate, Mr Birkett. Ed.)

This effect can easily be achieved by

storing your used copies of 8000 Plus on the floor, trapping the trailing mains cable so that it eventually pulls tightly against the case where the cable enters at the back. Release the cable, and the fault vanishes. One of the most easily produced types of computer graphics!

L Birkett,
Halesworth, Suffolk

8000 Plus: This is a classic case of a need for an 8000 Plus binder, methinks; can't have those precious copies of the mag lying all over the floor!

Back to our roots

Every edition lately brings news of yet another piece of hardware to put inside, behind or beside the PCW.

Aren't we in danger of losing sight of the original concept of the PCW - a simple, cheap, easy to operate package which we could all get to grips with? It word processes, does accounts, DTP, educates and amuses. It's a basic machine at an unbeatable price.

Let's have a look at what the prosperous PCW owner is now being encouraged to do. He wants more RAM - he can upgrade to 1Mb for £136. Why not add the delights of a hard disc, say, 40Mb at £414. He's dissatisfied with the 8000 series keyboard. Why not change to a superior 102-key replacement at £90? Find the 8000 a bit slow? Double the speed with another add-on for about £90. Why not invest in a 3.5" or 5.25" drive? It will only cost between £90-£135.

And it doesn't stop there; let's face it, by current standards the printout of the native 8000 series printer isn't too hot. The 9512's daisywheel is virtually extinct in the rest of the computer world. 24-pin, bubblejet and inkjet printers are faster and quieter, and offer better quality. Let's get a brilliant 24-pin for around £300. Oh, and we'll need another £20-odd driver disc.

So there we are, a turbo charged 8512 with 1Mb of RAM, a 30Mb hard disc, smashing keyboard, an extra drive, all linked in to a super new printer. Cost of the original 8512? Around £500. Cost of upgrading? Approximately £1,630. If that's the kind of machine you want or need, what's the point? A quality 80286 will cost you perhaps £1,300. Sell the PCW and buy a PC. Why try to make a silk purse out of the excellent, functional sow's ear which we know as the PCW? Would you spend a fortune to upgrade your humble Morris Minor to a Ferrari? Are we in danger of forgetting our roots?

Mike Maber
Weymouth, Dorset

8000 Plus: I think not; the new products which you mention are a testimony to the potential of the PCW. You, as the user, have the choice to exploit or ignore this. If you don't see the need to upgrade in any way, then you can keep the original package, with no loss of face or compromise in quality. Does anyone have any more thoughts on this one?

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Competition

Ever thought of venturing into the world of desktop publishing? Answer the questions below and you could be the winner of a complete DTP system!



Launch yourself into the world of DTP with this month's fabulous competition prizes!

Mention the phrase Desk Top Publishing, and you could find yourself embarking on a hazardous course through jargon. DTP is a PCW application which can conjure up the idea of extremely complicated procedures; what is meant by publishing on a desk top anyway?

The truth of the matter, you'll be pleased to learn, is that DTP opens up a whole new world of creativity for you and your PCW. Using a DTP package to produce letters and reports can add that touch of professionalism which can really help you to get your work noticed. Club newsletters and stationery can benefit from an individual identity with tailor-made logos and letterheads.

The Desktop Publisher, from Database Software, is one of a range of quality DTP programs for the PCW. The package comes with everything you need to start the creative ball rolling - that means the software itself, plus a mouse and an interface, which allows

you to connect the mouse to the back of the PCW. Once the system is installed, you can fully unleash the graphics potential of your machine, and you'll be producing quality artwork in no time. What's more, The Desktop Publisher comes complete with a no-nonsense manual, allowing you to get down to the pleasurable business of DTP-ing in the minimum amount of time.

This month's Back Page competition is rather special. Database Software have generously donated over £200-worth of prizes, just waiting to be won. First prize is The Desktop Publisher - a complete DTP package, consisting of the software program itself, a mouse, and the interface through which the mouse is connected to the back of the PCW.

For the two lucky runners up, Database are offering prizes worth over £60. These will be an AMX mouse together with an interface. This means that all you have to do is browse through the advertisements in 8000 Plus - or check the Good Software Guide's DTP section (last published in our May issue) - and select a software package to suit you! Remember though, that you will already have the most expensive part of the system in your possession - that is, the mouse and the interface - so be sure that the software you choose comes without these two elements.

So, how can you ensure that you're in the running for one of our bumper prizes? Simple. Answer the questions below, and send them in on a postcard, to the following address (which is for competitions only): 8000 Plus, DTP Competition, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP (now there's a new postcode for all those among you who are collecting the various different ones that we publish!) But hurry; entries must arrive no later than 27th June 1991. May the best person win!

1 What is the name of the famous cartoon mouse created by Walt Disney at the beginning of this century?
a) Mickey b) Dickey c) Nicky

2 Who wrote the book, *Of Mice and Men*?
a) Anthony Burgess b) George Orwell c) John Steinbeck

3 Which of these is a play by Agatha Christie?
a) Murder at Mouse Grange b) The Mouse Mystery c) The Mouse Trap

4 One of the following is a town in Cornwall. Which is it?
a) Mousewell b) Mousehole c) Mouseville

NEXT MONTH!

External Affairs

Many of you have considered buying an 'external' printer - but have been put off by insufficient details on how to install and use them. July's 8000 Plus has a round-up of popular external printers, and examines just to get them working in harmony with your favourite software programs. No stone is unturned in next month's special feature!

Drive time II

This month we've looked at installing an internal 3.5 inch drive in your PCW9512, and next month it's the turn of the PCW8000 machines. We've a fully illustrated, step by step guide to installation, plus a look at the benefits of making such an important addition to your PCW. July's issue of 8000 Plus answers all of your questions, so don't miss it!

In a fix?

As we've shown over the last few months, DIY PCW repairs are both achievable and inexpensive. However, there may come a time when you feel that the repair work would be better left in the hands of the professionals. So, next month, we are proud to present the 8000 Plus Guide to PCW Repairers. Is there one near you? How long are you likely to be PCW-less? Will companies carry out repairs on-site? All is revealed - next month!

Soft Options Surgery

Next month, we're following up the initial Soft Options clinic with a more specialised collection of your queries. So, if you're finding that your discful of utilities is anything but a Soft Option, drop us a line in good time for our July issue!

Mini Office

Join Tony Hart in July's 8000 Plus for a step by step guide on how to use the Mini Office spreadsheet module to keep track of sports results. The method can be adapted for whatever sport you play - or follow - so stand by for July!

The July issue of 8000 Plus is on sale from 27th June.

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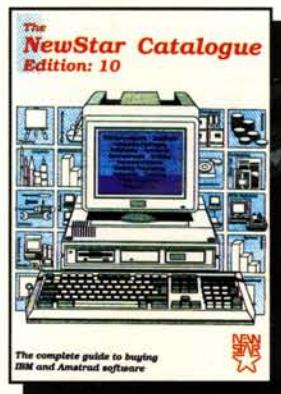
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Hello!

Welcome to June's 8000 Plus! As you can probably guess by the cover, we've been knee-deep in DIY this month, fitting an internal 3.5 inch drive to a PCW9512. It really was surprisingly easy to do, and if you try it yourself, it will take about an hour. However, because we had to photograph it as we went along (for the walkthrough on page 46), the whole process took a day! It takes about twenty minutes to photograph each step when the subject matter is simple - so you can imagine how long we worked on this one! Incidentally, in case you were wondering, the hands in the walkthrough belong to Martin.

Whenever it comes to upgrades or add-ons of any kind for features in 8000 Plus, we usually turn to our own fleet of PCWs in the office. We've got three machines; Martin and Karen use 8512s, and I've got a 9512. The only problem is that over the years, all the machines have been used at one time or another to help carry out reviews, walkthroughs and so on. When it came to this month's cover feature, we had, quite literally, run out of guinea pig machines. So, the one that you see is the personal possession of Martin (8000 Plus's able staff writer!). Next month, when we do the same for the 8000 series, it will be Karen's own PCW which gets the treatment. It's rather like a perk of the job, I suppose!

Many of you will now have received a leaflet telling you about our forthcoming book on Micro Design. I am editing the book, and believe me, it's well worth having! Alec has done a fabulous job, and there really is no stone left unturned. However, some confusion has arisen over Andy Akerman's comment about the versions of Micro Design. To set the record straight, the book is devoted to Micro Design 2, and there is no mention of the mysterious versions 1 and 3 whatsoever! And don't forget, you can still take advantage of the special discount available to subscribers only.

That's about it for June - keep sending in your ideas, comments and suggestions to me at the usual address - (code marking your envelope SL so that I can give your letter priority over the rest). I can't reply to all of your correspondence, because time just doesn't permit, but I do read every one, and note the information therein.

I'll leave you to enjoy the issue, and will get cracking on July's 8000 Plus!

See you next month!

Sophie

Sophie Lankenau
Editor, 8000 Plus

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The picture shows a typical staff meeting.

David St John Thomas (publisher) is standing behind **Lynne Jackman** (editorial manager) and **Grant Shipcott** (production manager). To the right is our editor **Richard Bell**. To the left are **Rieta Vilar** (manager of our new head office in the Highlands) and **Nancy Smith** (associate editor and writer of Helpline). **Carol Pope** the news editor, whose lively reporting has won much praise, was out on location. These are the people working for you who indeed believe the magazine belongs to its readers.

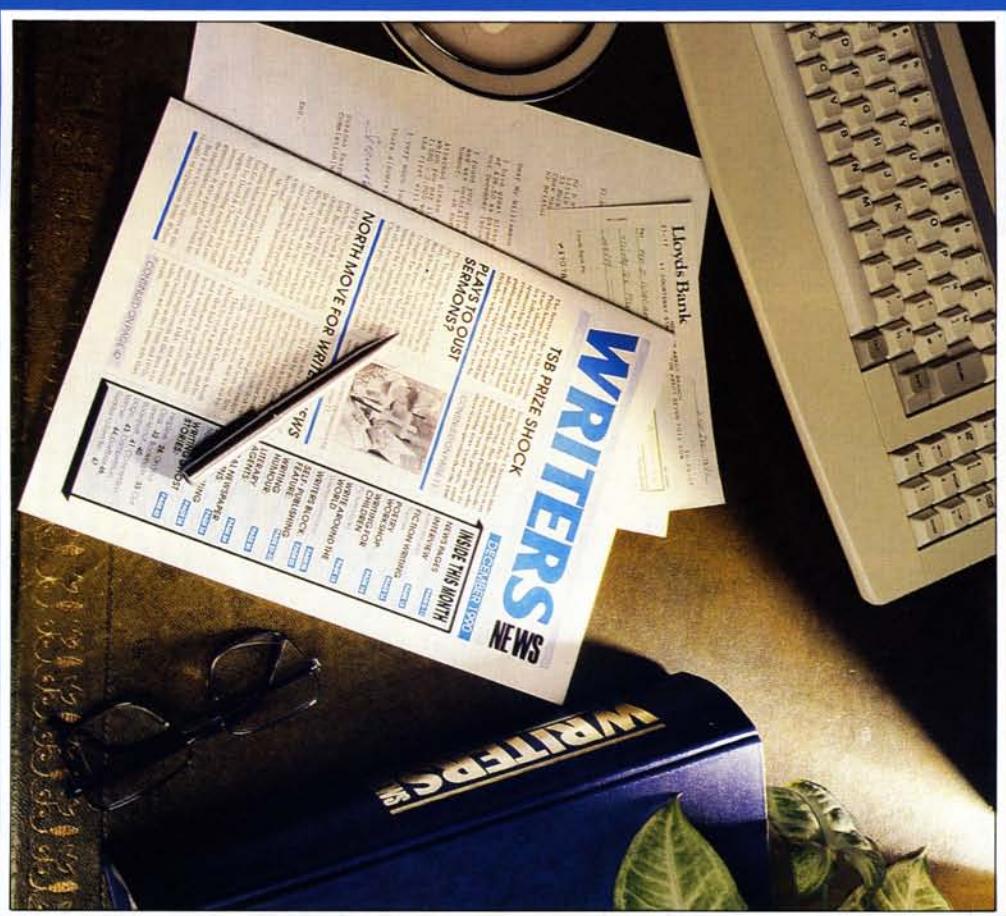


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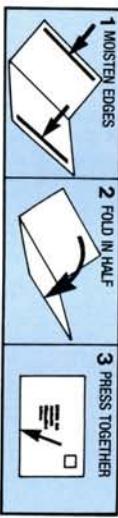
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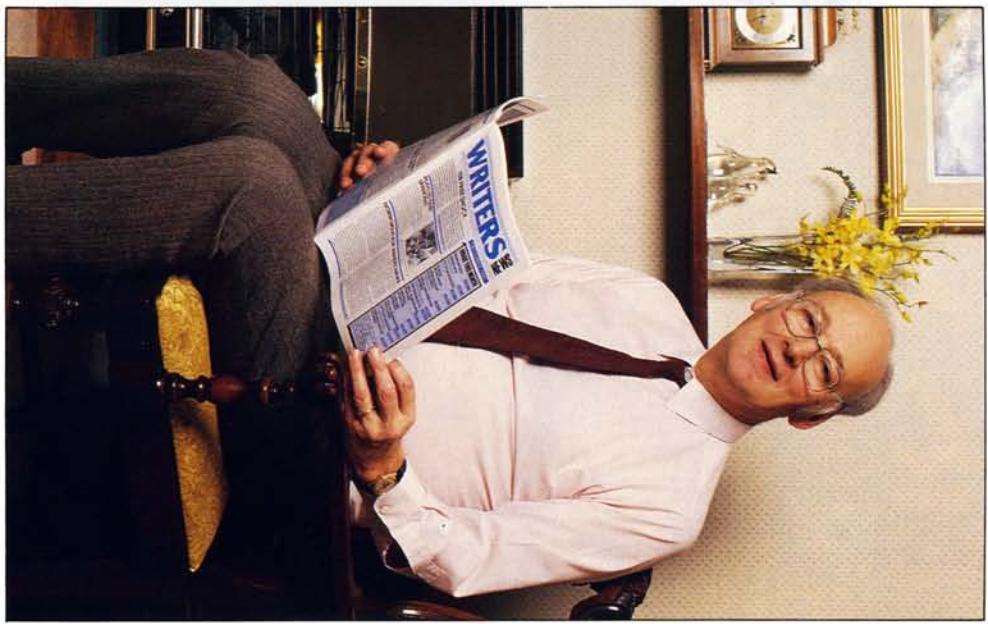
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